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ABSTRACT

This document, which is a supplement to an ongoing study on the structures of the education and initial training systems in the European Union, focuses on education and initial training in the following five countries: Estonia; Latvia; Lithuania; Slovenia; and Cyprus. The document consists of separate reports for each country. Each report is subdivided into sections devoted to topics such as the following: responsibilities and administration; preschool education; compulsory education; initial vocational education and training; postcompulsory secondary education; higher education; and adult education. The following are among the topics discussed within those sections: basis of the education system; changes in the 1990s; distribution of responsibilities; supervision, evaluation, and guidance; financing: advisory, consultative, and participatory bodies; private institutions; organization of schools; curriculum; assessment and guidance; teaching staff; admission requirements; fees and financial support for students; the academic year; courses; assessment and qualifications; and specific legislative frameworks. All five reports include numerous tables of statistical data on topics such as numbers of students and teachers, student-teacher ratios in public and private institutions, and the subjects and types of lessons taught in the different grade levels and institutions. (Contains 49 tables/figures.) (MN)

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Supplement to the Study on the Structures of the Education and Initial Training Systems in the European Union

The Situation in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia and Cyprus

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May 1999

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Introduction

Since 1996, the EURYDICE network has increasingly extended its activities to the countries of central and eastern Europe and Cyprus, to help prepare them to take part in the EU education programme, Socrates.

In order to ensure that these countries would be fully involved in educational cooperation in the Community, it was important at the outset to improve awareness of how their own education systems were organized. The purpose of the present study is to respond to this need. It constitutes a *Supplement* to the basic document "Structures of the Education and Initial Training Systems in the European Union" jointly produced and regularly updated by EURYDICE and CEDEFOP.

As in the above-mentioned basic edition covering the European Union and EFTA/EEA countries, the present study can claim neither to be exhaustive, nor to offer an in-depth analysis of ongoing developments in the educational field. It aims to provide basic descriptive information about the education systems of the countries concerned, so that the interested reader may better understand the organisation of these systems and how they are structured. The information in question relates to the three Baltic countries (Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia), Slovenia and Cyprus. A similar first *Supplement* on Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania, the Czech Republic and Slovakia was published in 1998.

For the drafting of information dealing with initial training, the EURYDICE National Units in the countries concerned have for the most part cooperated closely with the National Observatories of the European Training Foundation (ETF). We should like to thank them all for their excellent contribution to the preparation of this *Supplement*, as a result of which EURYDICE is now able to inform its readers about education in yet more European countries, and reflect better than ever before the richness and diversity of education systems in Europe.

Luce Pépin
Head of the
Eurydice European Unit

May 1999

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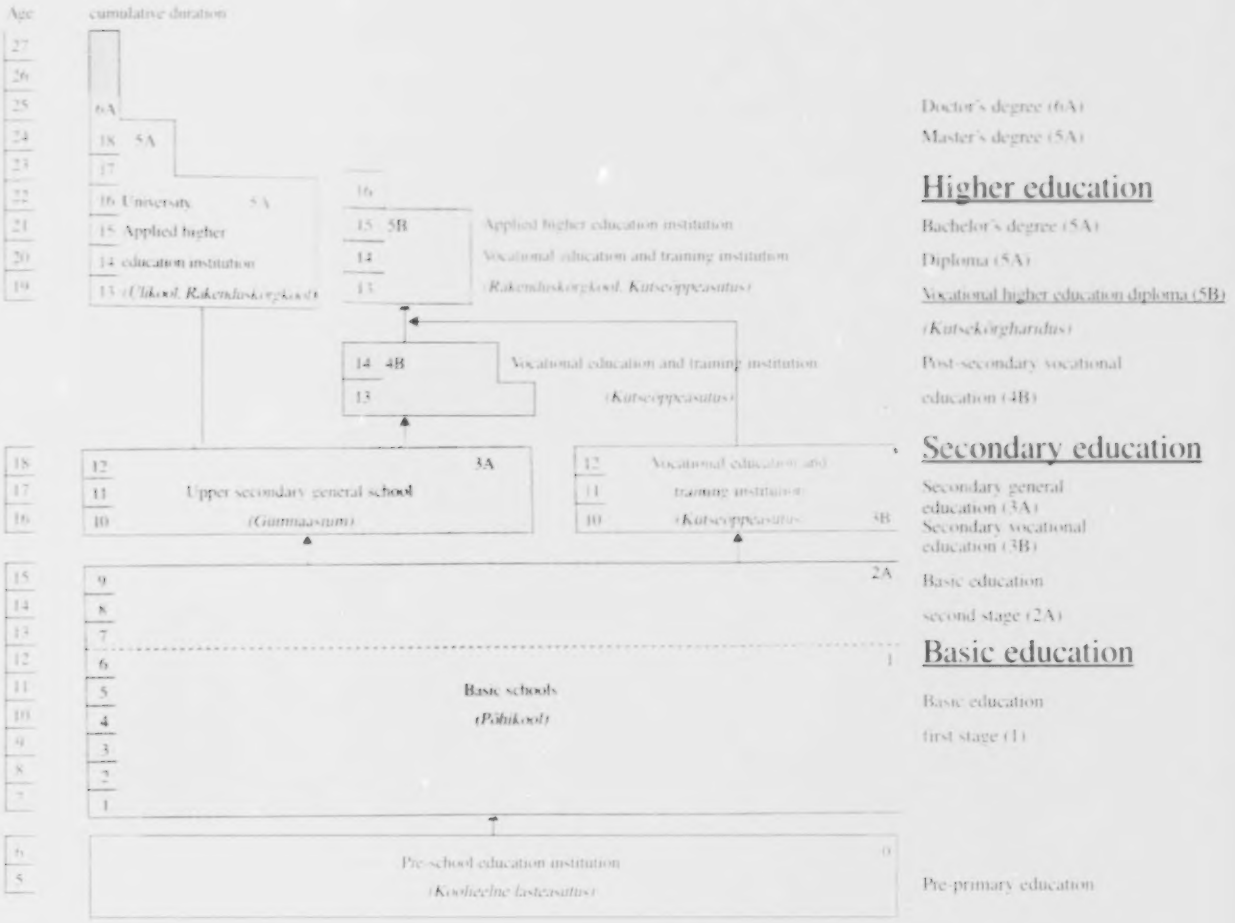

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Estonia

1. Responsibilities and administration

1.1. Background

Estonia lies on the eastern shores of the Baltic Sea and covers 45,227 square kilometres. The country is situated on the level north-western part of the east European platform, on which there are only slight variations in elevation. The highest point *(Suur Munamägi)* is 318 metres above sea level. Estonia has over 1500 islands and more than 1400 lakes, and its population is 1 462 130 (1 January 1997). Its capital is Tallinn, with a population 420 470. The ethnic divisions are Estonian, 64.2%, Russian, 28.7%, Ukrainian 2.7%, Belorussian 1.5%, Finnish 1.0% and others, 1.9%. The religious denominations are Lutheran, Russian Orthodox, Baptist and others. The main languages are Estonian (official) and Russian.

State independence was regained on 20 August 1991, Independence Day being 24 February.

Adopted by a referendum on 28 June 1992, the Constitution established the principles of the rule of law. It recognises the principle of separate and balanced powers, the independence of the courts, and guarantees of fundamental human rights and liberties according to universally recognised principles and norms. Estonia is a democratic parliamentary republic whose head of state is the President of the Republic. Supreme power is vested in its citizens who have the right to vote by electing 101 members to the *Riigikogu* or State Assembly (parliament), and by participating in referendums. Executive power rests with the Government.

Estonia is divided into 15 counties *(maakond)*, 207 rural municipalities *(vald)*, and 47 towns *(linn)*. Since 20 June, 1992, the national currency has been the Estonian kroon (1 kroon = 100 sent). Estonia has been a member of the United Nations since 17 September 1991 and a member of the Council of Europe since May 1993.

1.2. Basis of the education system

Estonian education stands for the preservation and development of the Estonian nation and culture, while taking into account the wish of its society to integrate into Europe. Education is based on the principles of humanism and democracy, and on respect for man and law. It focuses on the issues that are important in contemporary society, including constant change, constant education, the flow of information, rapid but economical development, competitiveness and integration.

The educational system is based on the laws shown below.

The Law on Education of the Estonian Republic *(Eesti Vabariigi Haridusseadus)* of 23 March 1992 is a framework law, the main aim of which is to lay down the general principles of the Estonian educational system.

The Law on Pre-School Childcare Institutions *(Koolieelse lasteasutuse seadus)* of March 1999 sets out the conditions for establishing, running and closing pre-school institutions in municipalities, as well as the principles governing the pre-school education system.

The Law on Basic and Upper Secondary Schools *(Põhikooli- ja gümnaasiumiseadus)* of September 1993 sets out the conditions for establishing, running and closing state and municipal primary schools, basic schools and gymnasiums, as well as the principles governing basic and general secondary education.

The Law on Vocational Education Institutions *(Kutseõppeasutuse seadus)* of June 1998 lays down the conditions for establishing, running and closing state and municipal vocational education institutions, along with the principles governing vocational secondary and higher education, in accordance with vocational higher education curricula.

The Law on Private Schools *(Erakooliseadus)* of June 1998 sets out the conditions for establishing such schools as the property of private individuals or legal entities, together with the principles for running these institutions, and the requirements of education given in them.

The Law on Applied Higher Education Institutions *(Rakenduskõrgkooli seadus)* of June 1998 lays down the conditions for establishing, running and closing state applied higher education institutions, as well as the principles governing higher education in accordance with the curricula of vocational higher education and diploma studies.

The Law on Universities *(Ülikooliseadus)* of January 1995 sets out the conditions for establishing, running and closing public universities, along with the principles governing higher education in accordance with the curricula of diploma and Bachelor's studies, and Master's and doctoral studies.

The Law on Adult Education *(Täiskasvanute koolituse seadus)* of November 1993 lays down the legal conditions for training adults, along with legal guarantees for lifelong learning in accordance with the wishes of the persons concerned.

The Law on Organisation of Research and Developmental Activity *(Teadus- ja arendustegevuse korraldus seadus)* of March 1997 sets out the basic principles governing activity to ensure the future development of creative science and technology as an integral part of Estonian cultural and economic life.

1.3. Changes in the 1990s

From 1988 to 1996, the structures for the administration of education in Estonia were repeatedly reorganised. In 1988, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Higher and Post-secondary Technical Education and the Vocational Education Committee were combined into one Education Committee. In 1989 the Education Committee was reorganised to create a new Ministry of Education, to administer general, vocational and higher education. The next reorganisation, in 1993, led to the establishment of the Ministry of Culture and Education which had to deal with overall education policy, higher education and science, while the State Board of Education had to deal with general and vocational education. In the winter of 1995/96, the Ministry of Culture and Education and the State Board of Education were reorganised once again, and the Ministry of Education was re-established as a separate entity.

During the last four years, there have been attempts to reduce the number and details of the central regulations and the number of intermediate decision-makers, and to increase the number of decisions made by local authorities and educational institutions.

The March 1992 Law on Education reduced the duration of compulsory education, and compulsory secondary education was replaced by compulsory basic education (grades 1-9).

Providing opportunities for children to receive pre-school education is the legal responsibility of local government and parents.

The State has recognised that all children, including disabled children and young people, have an equal right to education.

Both Estonian- and Russian-language schools are treated as parts of a uniform education system.

There are special provisions for schools whose language of instruction differs from the national language. The Law on Basic and Upper Secondary Schools (see above) provides for the extension of Estonian language instruction, and a transition towards the use of Estonian as a teaching language in upper secondary general schools *(Gümnaasium)* by the 2007/2008 school year at the latest.

Since the 1993/94 academic year, the study period of secondary schools using the medium of Russian has been brought into line with that of the corresponding schools which provide teaching in the Estonian language, with the addition of one academic year to the curriculum in the case of the former. In 1997, on the initiative of the Ministry of Education, a development plan for schools using the medium of Russian was prepared.

Its aims are to highlight the problems facing schools that provide education in the Russian language, find ways of solving them within the formal education system and support plans for specific related activity.

The management of the foregoing process calls for a long-term development plan and radical steps in the interim transitional period up to 2007. During this period, ways have to be found of offering various language acquisition opportunities and models to the different age-groups, while intensifying the recruitment of language teachers and providing them with in-service training.

The Estonian National Curriculum for Basic and Secondary Education covering grades 1-12 was approved by the Government as law on 6 September 1996. A transition to a more pupil-centred school has begun via the curriculum design process. This implies that pupils and teachers are co-operating partners, providing the former with increased freedom of choice and greater responsibility for their study results.

In schools using the Estonian language, implementation of the national curriculum began in the autumn of 1997. In 1997 also, with the initiative of the Ministry of Education, the development plan for Russian medium schools was prepared as part of the 1997-2007 Activity Plan for a unified Estonian education system. The development plan was approved by the Government on 22 January 1998, and the 'Russian-medium' schools began their transition towards the curriculum in the autumn of the same year.

The aim during preparation of the national curriculum was to increase local influence on decision-making within the school organisation, as well as on teaching methods and financing, and to make schools more open. The transition to the curriculum entails and emphasises several priority directions of development and, in accordance with the aims laid down in its general section, the content of general education and teaching materials is being constantly renewed.

Priorities in the field of teacher training include the following: providing both future and in-service teachers with the approach, attitudes and skills needed to implement the new curriculum (particularly important here are co-operation with pupils, teamwork with other teachers, recognition of the individuality of pupils when teaching and the openness of schools); training of school heads; promotion of the teaching of Estonian as the official language; improvement of the Estonian-language skills of teachers in schools using Russian; retraining of foreign language teachers; and computer training.

1.4. Distribution of responsibilities

As a result of the updating of the current legislation and the application of the new regulations in all aspects of life, the administration of education has been divided between different leadership/government levels. In 1997 a discussion about updating the March 1992 Law on Education was initiated. At present, the following bodies are responsible for the education system.

1.4.1. Administration at national level

The Parliament *(Riigikogu)* approves the laws regulating education, through which the main directions of education policy and the principles of school organisation are defined. It also approves tuition fees.

The Government of the Republic *(Vabariigi Valitsus)* decides the national strategies for education, approves the national curriculum for educational institutions, establishes salary scales for educational staff, and draws up rules for registering children in compulsory education.

The Ministry of Education *(Haridusministeerium)* has to perform the following tasks: co-ordinate the implementation of education policy; ensure the satisfactory implementation of – and compliance with – educational legislation; draft the requirements for the general content of education and the national curriculum; establish the rules on national supervision and ensure that it is satisfactory; accredit and issue licenses to educational institutions and finance them in accordance with the law on the national budget; enforce the financial norms for use by institutions in the design of local and school budgets; supervise administration of the methodological services of institutions; prepare the Government-planned training of staff in education; and administer the public assets used by public educational institutions and the education system as a whole.

1.4.2. Administration at local level

The county governments *(maavalitsus)* and their structures involve the departments of education, which provide supervision at regional level of the educational activities of pre-school childcare institutions and

schools. They formulate the education development plans of the county, provide information on public financing and the Ministry of Education, organise events for pupils and teachers in the counties and advise local government on educational questions.

The local government authorities *(vald, linn)* organise maintenance of pre-school childcare institutions, basic and secondary schools, schools for extra-curricular activities and school libraries. They also run cultural centres, museums, sports centres and other local institutions in the municipality or town concerned.

In addition, the local government authorities keep registers of children in the compulsory education age-range, monitor their attendance, appoint the heads of municipal educational institutions, draw up and implement plans for the development of regional education, define and approve school districts, appoint school boards and run school medical services and meals.

1.4.3. Administration at school level

The school board *(hoolekogu)* has to discuss school development plans. It co-ordinates the conditions and carries out job interviews for the post of head teacher; presents the candidates for the head teacher post and its subsequent appointee; co-ordinates the school charter, budget and the school curriculum; approves the appointment of school staff, as well as amendments in staff salary rates proposed by the school head; approves the conditions; participates in school problem-solving and supervises school activities; decides on the provision of material support to pupils on the basis of school proposals; and organises support for the school. In basic and upper secondary schools, the board consists of teacher representatives, the founders of the school, pupils, parents and organisations supporting the school and former pupils. In vocational schools, the school board must be formed from representatives of the school founders, experts from the professions and area of specialisation taught in the school, employer and employee associations involved in particular fields of training, and pupil representatives.

Individual schools have to ensure study opportunities for every child of compulsory education age in the school district, as well as health care for their pupils, and draw up a timetable in accordance with health protection norms. The curriculum of the school is the basis for its teaching. It is drafted in compliance with the national curriculum. The school objectives, lesson plans, content of subjects and the elective courses available at the end of basic and upper secondary general education are all specified in the school curriculum. The content of the curriculum is open to proposals and, in some cases, possible input not only from school staff, but pupils, parents, local government authorities, local firms and other stakeholders. Basic and upper secondary general schools are entitled to issue certificates to pupils who complete their courses satisfactorily.

The head teacher has to ensure the effective running and organisation of the school; effectively manage its teaching and financial activities, in co-operation with the school board, the education council and the student board; sign employment contracts with school staff; and organise job interviews for vacant teaching posts.

The teachers' board *(õppenõukogu)* has to define, analyse, and evaluate the teaching activities in the school, and carry out the necessary management decisions.

Teachers *(õpetaja)* have to select the textbooks, workbooks and instructional materials in general. They draw up timetables for the elective courses, and select or devise teaching methods. When selecting literature for teaching, they have to take into account that national funds may be spent only on the textbooks approved by the Ministry for the curriculum concerned. The workbooks and additional instructional materials have to be bought by the pupils themselves, although support from local government is available.

Pupils are allowed to choose a school on the basis of their interests and abilities, to select subjects from the optional courses, form representative bodies, establish associations and organise activities at school.

During the transition from centralised decision-making and financing to decentralised decision-making at local government, school and county government level, increasing importance will be attached to negotiations entailing a comprehensive analysis of the educational institution network. Issues involved include the following: the placement of the student population living in the area; the need for education at different levels; the qualifications of teachers working in the region; curricular proposals and trends in regional schools; basic teaching materials in schools; consistency with established teaching and cultural traditions; and the social needs of regions, and the role of schools in their educational and cultural development. Both internal and external evaluations are of special importance.

1.5. Supervision/Evaluation/Guidance

According to the Constitution, education in Estonia is supervised by the State. The Laws on Pre-school Childcare Institutions, Basic and Upper Secondary General Schools, and Private Schools stipulate that national supervision of their activities must be carried out in line with rules established by the Ministry of Education.

The general education system is evaluated by means of this supervision, while external evaluation is carried out by school-leaving examinations at the upper-secondary (general) level, nation-wide tests, inspection studies and analyses, etc. This work is organised and co-ordinated by the Ministry of Education, which determines the priorities for supervision and participates in it.

More specifically, supervision is the task of the Supervisory Section (Inspectorate) of the Ministry and the education departments of the county governments, while the specialists at the National Examinations and Qualifications Centre compile and administer national examinations.

In addition to the external evaluation of schools, internal evaluation is becoming increasingly important. From the perspective of self-evaluation, emphasis has been placed on **efficiency**, for example as regards the cost of pupil places, and the optimal use of school buildings and human resources; on the **internal environment**, including the organisational culture and clarification of objectives and problems; on **outcomes**, among them pupil progress and results, a balanced curricular structure and achievement of curricular objectives, and the school as a regional cultural centre; and on **influence**, including competitiveness, willingness to communicate and pupils' attitudes towards citizenship. Both quantitative and qualitative indicators are used in the evaluation. In order to define educational activities, the requirements presented in different legal acts are used, and in particular the experience acquired during the preparatory work of designing the national curriculum and school curricula.

1.6. Financing

Pre-school education institutions receive their funding from the local budget, parents and donations (from institutions, enterprises, organisations and individuals). Parents may contribute to teaching and catering expenses in a proportion decided by the local authority. The level of these expenses is determined by the Ministries of Education and Social Affairs.

At all schools, regardless of their ownership, up to the end of upper secondary education, the salaries of teaching staff, school heads and their deputies and the expenses for textbooks, are covered by the budget of the Ministry of Education, in accordance with the number of students at the school concerned. All other expenses are borne by the authority responsible for the school (whether the central government, a municipality or a private concern).

It is possible to distinguish between three types of schools in terms of ownership:

- state schools financed by the central government budget;
- municipal schools financed by the local government budget and also by the central Government, via the Ministry of Education.
- private schools financed by their owners.

Schools have their own budget, which includes funds for major or minor construction work, and expenditure for running costs and the salaries of staff other than teachers, heads and deputy heads.

Out of 722 institutions of general education in the 1998/99 school year, 34 are responsible to the central government and 660 to the municipalities, while 28 are privately owned. There are 180 primary schools (grades 1-6), 307 basic schools and 235 upper secondary general schools incorporating a basic school on their premises. The Estonian system does not differentiate between primary and lower secondary education, both of which constitute basic schooling. There are 89 schools providing vocational education, 71 of which are state owned, 3 are municipal schools and 15 are privately owned.

1.7. Advisory/Consultative/Participatory bodies

The Ministry of Education is assisted in defining its policy by different consultative bodies as follows:

- The *Ainenõukogud* (Subject Panels), consultative bodies for general education;
- The *Hariduskorraldusnõukoda* (General Education Management Board), the consultative body of heads of regional educational departments;
- The *Õppurite Nõukoda* (Student Advisory Chamber), a consultative body for the Minister, consisting of secondary, vocational and university student representatives and their organisations;
- The *Haridusfoorum* (Educational Forum), an advisory body of different interest groups discussing development issues in education;
- The *Kõrghariduse Nõukoda* (Higher Education Advisory Chamber), a consultative body of university representatives at the Ministry, which is concerned with problems of university education;
- *Teadus- ja Arendusnõukogu* (Research and Development Council), a consultative body chaired by the prime minister;
- *Eesti Teadusfond* (the Estonian Science Foundation), a consultative body of experts, concerned with financing science projects;
- *Kõrghariduse Hindamise Nõukogu* (Higher Education Evaluation Council) responsible for the accreditation of higher education institutions.

The social partners in Vocational Education and Training (VET), who are representatives of employers and trade unions, are involved in VET through vocational councils established at the Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Vocational councils deal with the preparatory stage of programme development by drawing up qualification requirements and vocational standards, which are the basis for the development of study programmes at educational institutions.

1.8. Private institutions

The Ministry of Education issues licences to private schools in accordance with their curricula, if they meet the necessary requirements. One of them is that the curriculum should correspond to the educational standards fixed for the level of education concerned.

Private schools are also eligible for support from the national budget to cover expenditure on teacher salaries and instructional materials, in much the same way as in schools responsible to the central government and municipalities. However, the owners of private schools have to bear their administrative costs.

Recognition of private higher education institutions, including their right to award degrees and diplomas, is dependent on accreditation.

In 1998/99, private general education, private VET and private higher education accounted for 1.2%, 5.6% and 25.8% respectively of all pupils and students in Estonia.

2. Pre-school education

Pre-school education is an initial prerequisite of satisfactory progress in everyday life and subsequent school activity. It is provided in accordance with legal responsibilities placed on parents and local government authorities. Pre-primary institutions are for children aged up to seven.

In comparison to the 1980s, pre-school institutions have become significantly more 'open', with greater emphasis than previously on the personal contribution, at this level, of family and the home. The role of pre-school institutions is to support and complement the family contribution, by promoting the growth, development and individuality of children. Several novel practices have emerged, including family care, the setting up of 'integration' groups (in which children with special needs are able to mix with other children and develop alongside them while remaining close to home), family advice services, and the establishment of private kindergartens and centres for children. The related aims and tasks are set out in the 1999 Law on Pre-

School Childcare Institutions and in the 1996 National Curriculum for Pre-school Education (the counterpart, at pre-school level, to the National Curriculum for Basic and Secondary Education referred to in Section 1.3.), a new draft of which is under discussion. Enforcement of the curriculum implies development of the family advice service.

The number of pre-school children in classes immediately preceding basic schools is greater than in pre-school classes for the very youngest. The size of classes, which are usually coeducational, is determined by the local authorities.

2.1. Organisation of pre-school institutions

From 1992-94, the number of pre-school institutions decreased, following a reduction in the birth rate, and other socio-economic changes. Among additional factors behind this trend were increased involvement of parents in their children's upbringing, and institutional fees that, for some families, were too high.

Pre-primary school groups are based on the age of children, as follows: 1-2 years, 2-3, 3-4, 4-5 and 5-6, with 7 the upper age limit; sometimes combined groups bring together children of different ages. Groups are not based on children's level of personal development. Evaluation of this is informal and plays no part in the possible transfer of children from one group to another.

Special pre-school learning groups and institutions support children who have problems with their eyesight, hearing or speaking, or physical or mental handicaps. The number of children in these groups is smaller than usual. In addition, family advice centres have been established to run regular rehabilitation sessions for children unable to attend pre-primary institutions.

The amounts parents pay in fees may be means tested at the discretion of local councils.

A pre-primary school may share premises with the primary grades of basic school. The local government executive also determines the timetable of institutions, in accordance with parental needs.

2.2. Curriculum

The work of pre-school institutions is governed by the National Curriculum for Pre-school Education which is also the basis for the family advice services. Rather than regulating the time spent on specific activities, the curriculum defines the fields, subject matter, knowledge and skills that have to be presented to or acquired by children.

A pre-school institution is entitled to draw up its plan of activity and daily work schedule, in accordance with national tradition and the cultural peculiarities of its region. The local government authority determines which language should be used in institutions employing only a single language for their classes.

Teaching staff are responsible for methods of instruction and the materials used in support. Institutions have to establish rules for the effective evaluation of teaching and children's progress, in accordance with the curricular requirements.

In order to improve their children's readiness for basic school, most parents of 5-6-year-olds try to make the most of opportunities offered by pre-school establishments. Special school preparation groups are also quite common, although attendance at them is not a precondition for entry to the first grade.

2.3. Pre-school teaching staff

In pre-school institutions, music teachers and physical education instructors are employed in addition to the core teaching staff whose training seeks to impart the necessary theoretical and practical skills. It emphasises the importance of familiarity with the early development of children and the environment in which it occurs, bearing in mind individual needs and character on the one hand, and familiarity with the demands of the curriculum on the other. It also stresses the need to approach teaching creatively. The content and organisation of training are conditioned by the goals of subsequent education, and the need for readiness to accept changes in social circumstances and design further study activities accordingly. Staff, who are generally full-time, are trained for degrees and diplomas in higher education institutions, including universities.

Opportunities for further training of pre-school teaching staff are at the discretion of individual institutions, since there is no firm contractual obligation for staff to attend additional training courses.

2.4. Statistics

At 31 December 1997, 58% of children aged between one and six attended pre-school institutions while, for those aged less than three, the percentage was 27%. For five- and six-year-old children, the ratio was 72%.

			1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Number of institutions			698	656	663	671	667	670
Teaching staff	Full- and part-time	Both sexes	8 698	8 163	8 093	8 080	8 070	7 953
		Female	8 685	8 144	8 078	8 070	8 058	7 933
Pupils enrolled	Full- and part-time	Both sexes	57 269	58 495	58 271	58 743	57 020	55 077
		Female	27 927	28 690	28 844	28 449	27 662	26 688

3. Compulsory education

As already mentioned, the March 1992 Law on Education replaced compulsory secondary education with grades 1-9 (normally corresponding to ages 7- 15/16) of the compulsory basic school.

Compulsory education begins in the first full school year after children have reached the age of seven[1]. It continues until they have satisfactorily completed basic education, or have reached the age of 17.

Since 1992, changes to the basic school system have been introduced, in parallel to the design of the 1996 national curriculum. Under them, basic school becomes an entire unit in its own right culminating in a specific level of qualification, satisfactory completion of which should equip school-leavers to become citizens, and choose the next stage of their studies. The changes will be completed when the revised national curriculum is fully implemented in the year 2001. Implementation is occurring in stages, beginning in 1997 for grades 1, 4, 7 and 10, 1998 for grades 2, 5, 8 and 11, and 1999 for grades 3, 6, 9 and 12. Thus the first children to experience the new curriculum through the whole of their compulsory education (grades 1-9) for the first time are expected to end their basic schooling in the year 2006, while those who complete the entire 12 grades (basic and secondary) of the new curriculum will do so for the first time in 2009.

The Estonian educational system does not differentiate between primary and lower secondary education.

Basic education is normally acquired on school premises, although study at home or in hospital are allowed under exceptional circumstances. In the case of the former, parents are naturally expected to create favourable learning conditions, and give their children full support.

School classes in general education are usually mixed, although separate classes for girls and boys are possible. The maximum authorised number of students in a class is 36 although, in order to help teachers work effectively, classes are reduced in size if they include pupils with special needs or significant learning difficulties (each of whom is considered equivalent to three 'normal' pupils for this purpose). Combined classes of pupils from different grades (years) are formed, if there are not enough students present to assemble separate classes.

In 1998/99, special education was provided for 10.9% of students at basic school level (with 2.9% attending special schools and classes). Every attempt is made to place children with only minor disabilities into mainstream schools, reserving special schools for those with more serious problems.

Pupils and parents are able to obtain advice from the school and local government regarding common problems. Support in overcoming difficulties is offered at ordinary basic schools by speech therapists, and at

1 However, those whose seventh birthday is in September begin the school year at the start of the same September. See also Section 3.1, (paragraph 4).

special schools by staff whose expertise depends on the concerns of the school. School psychologists are usually employed for pupils and students in basic and upper secondary general institutions (grades 1-12), with one psychologist for 600 students. Several local government authorities have developed services to provide psychological counselling to all schools in their region. In some cases, psychologists only work in large schools, since there tend to be fewer students with problems at smaller schools. In 1995, the work instructions of school psychologists were approved by the National School Board. They stress that, besides providing individual and group student counselling, the school psychologist should advise teachers, school leaders and parents, and co-operate with other educational and social health care institutions.

School and local government staff may refer students or their parents to family advice service centres, which have been established in several towns to provide psychological advice.

Parents, whose children have reached the age of compulsory education, can freely choose a school for them, provided it has places available. Schools are obliged to cater for the education of all such children living within the catchment area determined by the local government executive authorities.

3.1. Organisation of the school

Basic schools operate in one or more shifts. Day-care groups may be formed at them for children who are unsupervised or receive no learning support at the end of the day.

Although the great majority of pupils at basic school study during the day, about 2% of them attend evening classes in principle meant for adults. Between 1963 and 1983, the number of schools decreased by almost a half. In 1981, there were 541 schools and, since then, 189 new ones – in the main, primary schools – have been founded. Since 1997 the number of schools has started once more to decrease.

An improved school network, including the setting up of small primary schools, enables younger pupils to attend school relatively close to home. At the same time, an increase in the number of small schools has been followed by an increase in the number of combined classes which has posed new problems. They include, in particular, children of different ages in the same classroom in which, for example, two pupils may be involved in first-grade learning, one in second-grade work, while three more may be trying to manage with grade 4, all of them under the supervision of a single teacher who will not normally have been trained to cope with this kind of situation. At present, such classes exist in most smaller basic schools, mainly in rural areas. Local government authorities are facing serious financial problems, because these schools have a relatively small number of pupils, but relatively high operational expenses. In spite of the developed school network, transport between home and school may still be a problem, especially for older pupils – schools with lower secondary grades tend to be located further from homes than those with primary grades.

The academic year usually lasts from 1 September in the calendar year until June the following year. It consists of a study period, exam period and holidays, which include one week in the autumn, two weeks at Christmas and one week in the spring, in addition to the summer break. The study period is a minimum 175 full-time days, five of which comprise a so-called study week. Each period lasts 45 minutes, with the number of lessons that pupils should attend during the week specified in the school curriculum. The maximum number of lessons per week for the different grades is as follows:

Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
lessons	20	23	25	25	28	30	30	32	34

3.2. Curriculum

Work on devising the national curriculum began in the Institute for Educational Research, at the initiative of the Ministry of Education, immediately following independence in 1991. This venture has taken into account not only the general way forward chosen by Estonia and the preferred development of its schools, but world-wide trends in education. Teachers, teacher trainers and educational officials have all been involved, in order

that the foregoing considerations can be reflected in ongoing curricular planning. In 1994 and 1995, two draft versions of the curriculum were released for discussion.

Approved in September 1996 (see also Section 1.3.), the national curriculum lays down the basic principles of schooling, providing a framework for the organisation of teaching and course content for all institutions of general education, regardless of their language of instruction. Schools base their individual work programme (the school curriculum) on the national curriculum. The development of the latter has resulted in scope for greater initiative on the part of schools, in which students and teachers can co-operate more closely. Pupils and students are freer to choose and so more responsible for their results. As to the school curriculum, this is drawn up by the teaching staff, with the approval of the headmaster and the school supervisory body.

The main aim of schools for general education is to help pupils and students develop into people who successfully manage their life and work, to their own benefit and that of society, while strengthening their sense of Estonian citizenship and responsibility towards the broader international community.

The standards of basic education are laid down in the national curriculum which specifies the aims and duration of study, the relation between the national and school curricula, compulsory subjects with their duration and content, opportunities for studying optional subjects and the conditions governing their selection, and the conditions that pupils or students should satisfy in terms of periods of study and with respect to their school-leaving qualifications.

Children with minor mental handicaps are taught in accordance with simplified curricula, also based on the national curriculum. The schools for children whose handicaps are more severe adopt their own specialised curricula.

The total period of study and its requirements may also be regulated by individual curricula. Optional subjects jointly selected by pupils or students and the school contribute to around 5% of basic school courses.

The optional subjects offered by a school may contribute to its own special identity related to a chosen subject bias, whether in languages, arts, science, or economic or other disciplines. In other cases, schools may provide for a diversity of grades, and teach students involved in broad and varied optional courses, in accordance with their own preferences and the skills of teaching staff.

Satisfactorily completed basic education is regarded as the normal stepping stone to secondary education. While pupils generally progress to the latter, therefore, on the strength of their basic learning achievements, there are no specific arrangements for those who have not obtained the basic school-leaving certificate, or for whom post-compulsory secondary education is considered otherwise inappropriate.

3.3. Assessment/Guidance

Assessment is an integral part of educational activity. Abilities may be assessed verbally, or in written results usually indicated by numerical grades based on a five-point system, where 5 stands for 'very good', 4, 'good', 3, 'satisfactory', 2, 'unsatisfactory' and 1, 'poor'.

There are two kinds of assessment concerned, first, with the learning process or, in other words, evaluation of the active participation of pupils in class and an appraisal by the teacher of what they have achieved over a given period; and secondly, assessment of their results with respect to curricular requirements.

Assessment of the study process provides information about the course of study and teaching. The objects and methods of assessment are chosen by the teacher who also decides whether the results of process assessment will be taken into account in assessing individual skills and capabilities in a given subject. Teachers are obliged to inform students and pupils of the principles underlying their assessment.

Results-related assessment is concerned with achievement in a particular subject once a certain amount of material has been covered. It might take the form of a straightforward set of short questions/test-paper, a more elaborate oral examination, a presentation, a practical task, a research project or an examination. Results may be assessed internally.

Pupils are graded at the end of a complete school session or part of it (term, or half-term), or at the end of an entire school course.

As a general rule, pupils are entitled to progress to the next year if they have been assessed in all compulsory subjects and never rated 'unsatisfactory'. In fact, the law also enables teachers to allow pupils to move on to the following year if they have had one or two such 'unsatisfactory' gradings.

The academic achievements of pupils, including final satisfactory completion of schooling, is formally recorded in the award of a certificate. Pupils at institutions of general education thus receive grade/form certificates for each school year, as well as a school-leaving certificate at the end of basic school.

To finish basic school, students have to pass three final centrally-set internal examinations.

There are several reasons for **guidance** and **counselling**. One of them is to help students with special needs. Another – which has led to more recent activity – has been the desirability of counselling students in so-called 'gymnasiums without classes' in which students have their own individual curricula.

With regard to career or vocational guidance, students are provided with information about different professions and qualifications needed for them, as well as about study options in Estonia and abroad. They are taught to analyse the demands and opportunities of the labour market, to formulate and evaluate their aims and options, and to prepare themselves consciously for choosing a profession.

While there is no centralised system of guidance for vocational and general education, some municipalities have institutions that offer support of this kind. Some have also started to train teachers to offer this kind of guidance in basic schools.

3.4. Teachers

The work of schoolteachers, who may be full- or part-time, is organised essentially with respect to specific grades and subjects. This point applies no less to study at home or in hospital. If children are absent from school for long periods because of ill-health, then teachers may visit and help them at home. Similarly, if children are ill in hospital, teachers are available to give them lessons, subject to medical approval.

Besides direct classroom teaching and its preparation, teachers may also be involved in the development of teaching materials, organisation of school events and activities (such as club activities), study tours and excursions, consultations, remedial classes, school/home intercommunication and contributions to school publications. They may also substitute for other teachers who are absent for any reason.

Initial teacher training is provided by higher education institutions.

The certificate awarded provides evidence of teaching qualifications. After working as a teacher for a minimum of three years, the person concerned can apply for a higher-level teaching qualification. The four levels of qualification are those of junior teacher, teacher, senior teacher and specialist in methods. A higher level of qualification also includes in-service training.

Subject teachers (whose activity is normally limited to a maximum three subjects from grades 7 to 12) and primary school teachers (who teach most subjects in grades 1 to 6) are employed throughout general education (whether basic, upper-secondary or for the handicapped), while classes for the handicapped are mainly taught by special teachers.

A special share (around 3% of the amount earmarked for teacher salaries) of the state budget, is allocated for in-service teacher training. Part of the money is allocated by the Ministry of Education for centrally-run training, while another share is used for locally-maintained training. The in-service teacher training system covers Estonian-speaking as well as Russian-speaking schools, although separate courses in Russian are organised regionally for primary school teachers. But most of the nation-wide subject courses are in Estonian.

Courses which comprise a special programme – theory combined with practical tasks involving interpretation of the theory – and which last more than 320 hours, may provide teachers with fresh qualifications. During these 'requalification' courses, they receive their normal salaries.

In-service teacher training may also be partly funded by local government budgets. In-service training which may take place during or after work, or during holidays, has to take into account national, regional and school priorities.

3.5. Statistics

Out of a total of 722 general education institutions in 1998/99, 34 are centrally administered, 660 are run by the municipalities and 28 are privately maintained. There are 180 primary schools (either grades 1-3, 1-4 or 1-6) including those with pre-school grades, 307 basic schools (grades 1-9) and 235 secondary schools (grades 1-12).

Basic education (grades 1-9) in 1996/97 – 1998/99

	Pupils	Teachers*	Pupils/Teacher	Pupils/Class
1996/97	185 145	14 216	13.0	22.3
1997/98	185 710	13 913	13.3	22.7
1998/99	186 665	14 807	12.6	23.4

* The number of teachers is estimated.

4. Post-compulsory secondary education

After satisfactorily completing basic school, pupils are entitled to continue their education free of charge in upper secondary general schools *(gümnaasium)* or vocational education institutions *(kutseõppeasutused)*. However, it should be noted that there is no initial vocational training or apprenticeship training in Estonia, although firms or managers sometimes train individuals or small groups at their own expense.

4.1. Upper secondary school *(gümnaasium)*

4.1.1. Organisation

Organisation of the secondary school *(gümnaasium)* is similar to that of basic schools *(Põhikool)*.

4.1.2. Curriculum

The weekly authorised maximum course workload at the gümnaasium is 35 hours. In addition to the compulsory subjects taught at this level, which are determined by the national curriculum and account for around 75% of total provision, the remaining 25% comprise subjects selected jointly by the students and the school. Certain subjects may be taught in more depth to some groups of students than others – with 25% of subjects selected more freely, schools can develop their own approach or course content in fields such as mathematics or physics, languages or business. There are no periods of special guidance within education at this level. Teachers are free to decide on the teaching methods and materials used for meeting the aims of the curricula.

The national curriculum for secondary education has been developed in accordance with the same principles described in Section 3.2. on basic education.

4.1.3. Assessment

The whole process of assessment in upper secondary general education is similar to that of basic education.

The main aim of the national examinations is to unify grading across all schools, enhance the credibility of school diplomas, and to make school-leaving examinations compatible with university entrance exams.

School-leaving national examinations at upper secondary level were introduced in 1997. The national exams are prepared centrally by groups of experts in the following subjects: the mother tongue (Estonian and

Russian), Estonian as the official language, English, German, Russian and French as modern foreign languages, mathematics, history, biology, chemistry and physics. The only compulsory national examination for school-leavers is the mother tongue.

Most examinations are in written form (languages except the mother tongue include an oral session), and the papers are administered centrally and marked externally either on a 10-point scale (the mother tongue) or a 100-point scale. A special certificate is issued to show the subjects in which students have passed their national examinations.

To complete their upper secondary schooling, students have to pass five school-leaving examinations. One of them is in the mother tongue. Two others then have to be chosen by students from the list of national examination subjects. However, students may sit either the national examinations themselves in those subjects, or an examination in one or both of them set by the school. But they may not sit both kinds of examination (national and school-set) in the same subject.

4.1.4. Teachers

Information regarding teachers at post-compulsory secondary level is the same as that applicable to teachers in compulsory education.

4.2. Vocational education and training

In recent years, the tendency to continue education at upper secondary level *(gümnaasium)*, instead of in VET institutions, has increased among pupils satisfactorily completing basic education. The proportion of those who opted for upper secondary schooling in this way rose from 56.2% in 1991 to 70% in 1997. Meanwhile, the number of basic education certificate holders who went on to Vocational Education and Training (VET) institutions (known as *kutseõppeasutused)* fell to 26%. One reason for this may be that the fields of specialisation offered in VET institutions are not attractive to the young, while the period of training is a long one. According to application forms received from young people, VET seems to be the least popular among the study opportunities available from grade 16 onwards – a fact that significantly influences the quality of learning activity. At the same time, however, interest in VET has increased among those successfully completing upper secondary education.

In November 1997, discussions began on a possible change in the Vocational Education Institutions Act of June 1995. The proposed amendments were intended to ensure integrated funding of VET, along with more flexible, transparent programme development and implementation for all interested parties.

An important aspect of the reform of the VET system was the establishment of the National Exam and Qualification Centre in January 1997. This Centre deals with programme development and requirements, qualifications, examinations, assessment and evaluation. In recent years, different interests in society, including employers and local authorities have begun to feel the need to co-operate. The social partners in VET (representatives of employers and trade unions) are involved in it via the Vocational Councils established at the Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. These councils deal with the preparatory stage of programme activity, in developing qualification requirements and vocational standards, themselves the basis for the development of courses at educational institutions.

The State has been the prime mover in the reorganisation of VET, since the majority of VET institutions are publicly maintained. As in the case of all other areas of education, the body responsible is the Ministry of Education which was restructured at the beginning of 1996 when the Vocational Education and Training Department was re-established. The Department runs two services, for educational management and adult education, respectively. The Curriculum Service, initially the Department's third unit, became part of the National Exam and Qualification Centre in 1997.

All authorities responsible for VET institutions act independently in school management matters, but have to follow national education policy. Principal decisions are drafted and approved by the Ministry of Education whose regulations also govern the registration and approval of all study courses. Alongside the VET reform, there is clearly organised sharing of interests and responsibilities among national and local authorities. Some local municipalities have already demonstrated interest and initiative by taking part in reorganisation of the VET system. At present, however, there is no firm consensus either on how to begin the decentralisation process, or

on the legislation required. Municipalities are currently obliged to co-ordinate and approve admission plans and programmes, but further active participation in the development of VET is at a very early stage.

Under the present system, different ministries, municipalities and private organisations run institutions offering VET programmes. Thus, in the 1998/99 academic year, the Ministry of Education was responsible for 56 schools, the National Police Board for one, the Ministry of Agriculture for 13, the Ministry of Social Affairs, one, the municipalities, three, and private organisations, 15. Out of this total of 89 institutions which provide VET courses, 60% use Estonian as the language of instruction, while 20% use Russian, and the remaining 20% use both languages.

4.2.1. Organisation

The size and number of study groups in VET schools are decided by the schools. The school courses of study are registered and approved according to the rules established by the Ministry of Education. Evening and distance learning are authorised in VET establishments where daytime instruction is the norm. One academic year involves at least 40 weeks of study, while holidays must be for a minimum of eight weeks.

4.2.2. Curriculum

It is intended that school programmes in upper secondary education (both its general and VET branches) should be based on the national programme. While the curriculum for general education has been completed, the one for VET is still in hand. The school programmes, which are designed to conform to the national ones, set out the specifics in greater detail.

Until 1998, there were two distinct curricula in the VET system, established by the June 1995 Vocational Education Institutions Law. Students could enter a VET institution *(Kutseõppeasutus)* after either basic school *(Põhikool)* or general upper secondary school *(Gümnaasium)*. Students entering after basic school could obtain a vocational school certificate *(kutseõppeasutuse lõputunnistus)* following 2-3 years of study equivalent to International Standard Classification for Education (ISCED) level 3/*3C*, and a post-secondary level qualification *(kutseõppeasutuse lõputunnistus keskerihariduse omandamise kohta)* after four years (ISCED 5/*3A*). These four-year qualifications were mostly in the fields of art and music. General upper-secondary school-leavers could also enter the same programmes, but get through them more quickly, completing the *kutseõppeasutuse lõputunnistus* in 1-2 years (ISCED 3/*4B*), and the post-secondary qualifications *(kutseõppeasutuse lõputunnistus keskerihariduse omandamise kohta)* sometimes in as little as two-and-a-half years (ISCED 5/*5B*). In certain fields, young people entering VET after basic school were able to complete additional hours of general upper secondary education (ISCED 3/*3A*) and, on passing the state exams, receive the same qualifications as those who actually attended school entirely at this level, thus becoming eligible to apply for universities *(Ülikool)* or institutions of applied higher education *(Rakenduskõrgkool)*. Students who followed this path received both the vocational and general upper secondary school certificates *(kutseõppeasutuse lõputunnistus kutse- ja keskhariduse omandamise kohta)*.

However, since approval of the June 1998 Vocational Education Institutions Law, the situation has changed. This new law states that there are two levels in the VET system – vocational secondary education *(kutsekeskharidus)* and vocational higher education *(kutsekõrgharidus)*. Admission to the former may follow either basic education or general upper secondary education. The period of study for those who have left basic school is at least three years (ISCED 3/*3B*) leading to a secondary vocational education certificate, the *lõputunnistus põhihariduse baasil kutsekeskhariduse omandamise kohta*. Young people with the general upper secondary school certificate may complete this level in less time (one or two years corresponding to ISCED 3/*4B*) and obtain the post-secondary vocational education certificate known as *lõputunnistus keskhariduse baasil kutsekeskhariduse omandamise kohta*. In some sectors (such as healthcare and the police), satisfactory completion of general upper secondary education is the prerequisite for entry to vocational education (ISCED 3/*4B*). Students who have completed secondary education (whether general or vocational) are eligible for vocational higher education, while those with the secondary vocational education certificate, who wish to continue their studies in a university (ISCED 6/*5A*) have to pass the corresponding state exams, similar to those required to obtain the general secondary certificate.

The common requirements for the national VET programme state that there are several such programmes. Each must ensure that, in the course of learning, students develop initiative and responsibility, as well as general skills like teamwork, problem-solving, decision-making, critical thinking and communication. Where general subjects are studied, they must be those that best complement and offer appropriate support to vocational training in the area selected by the trainee.

Thus the national VET programme for young people who have completed basic school aims to encourage development of the knowledge, skills, experience and attitudes required to perform independent skilled work, on the assumption that trainees have enough general education and ability to apply this know-how in both large and small firms after they have qualified. The minimum period of study entailed is 120 weeks, during which the vocational or occupation-related dimension must account for at least 50%.

The national programme for those who have fully completed general secondary education similarly seeks to foster the development of the expertise, experience and attitudes needed to carry out more complex independent skilled work, here on the assumption that the students have acquired a satisfactory general upper secondary background, along with the ability to grasp technological processes and analysis. In this case, the period of study is a minimum 40-100 weeks, with vocational or occupation-related aspects accounting for at least 85% of the workload.

4.2.3. Assessment/Guidance

Assessment of students at VET institutions is on a five-point scale, where 5 is 'very good', 4, 'good', 3, 'satisfactory', 2, 'unsatisfactory' and 1, 'poor'.

Students who complete courses at VET institutions receive a certificate. At present, however, these certificates do not represent a formal qualification as such, but merely evidence that the holder has covered a certain programme, at a certain level in a given school. This may change in the future, with implementation of an employee qualification system and more thorough assessment of qualifications.

4.2.4. Teachers

Most teachers in VET institutions are currently trained in higher education institutions and post-secondary schools to prepare students for specific occupations. The teachers are usually subject specialists, with little training in teaching as such, so that they are not necessarily professionally qualified to communicate effectively what they know. Furthermore, many teachers are unfamiliar with contemporary technology and teaching methods, in which theoretical, lecture-based courses are giving way to more practical interactive work (including seminars, case studies and independent projects). As a result, they need additional training in order to update their skills. According to the 1993 Adult Education Law *(Täiskasvanute koolituse seadus)*, the training of government officials, as well as teachers, is financed from the state budget, and at least 3% of the amount earmarked for salaries is used for in-service training. Teachers also need regular in-service training in firms – the best way of learning about practical aspects of the workplace, and labour market requirements at any given time. This is a further reason why the education sector should establish close co-operation with industry and other interest groups in society.

With a staff/student ratio of 1:5, VET institutions are currently overstaffed and inefficient. One aim of reform is to increase the teacher/student ratio from around 1:12 to 1:16. The average ratio of teachers to other personnel is only slightly over one, indicating that overstaffing is mainly attributable to the large number of administrative and financial employees. In recent years, VET institutions have been unable to attract younger staff, with the result that more than 35% of the teachers in them are aged over 50, and mainly women.

4.2.5. Statistics in 1996/97 – 1998/99

Pupils

	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99
General upper secondary (ISCED 3/3A)	37 532	38 319	37 381
Vocational education total	29 953	30 233	30 264
Vocational education based on basic education (ISCED 3/3C)	1 750	1 793	1 437
Vocational education with upper secondary general education (ISCED 3/3A)	11 519	12 238	12 793
Post-secondary technical education based on basic education (ISCED5/3A)	4 438	4 231	3 740
Vocational education based on upper secondary education (ISCED3/4B)	3 288	3 449	4 231
Post-secondary technical education based on upper secondary education (ISCED 5/5B)	8 958	8 522	8 063

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Pupils per class

	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99
General upper secondary (ISCED 3/3A)	27.6*	28.3*	25.8*
Vocational education total			
Vocational education based on basic education (ISCED 3/3C)	24.3	22.9	18.9
Vocational education with upper secondary general education (ISCED 3/3A)	22.2	23.2	23.1
Post-secondary technical education based on basic education (ISCED5/3A)	22.2	20.6	21.25
Vocational education based on upper secondary education (ISCED3/4B)	24.4	26.7	22.9
Post-secondary technical education based on upper secondary education (ISCED 5/5B)	24.3	23.9	22.6

* Special education is excluded.

5. Higher education

Higher education in Estonia is divided into:

- **Universities** *(Ülikoolid)*, which offer the following academic higher education and diploma programmes:
  - *Diplomiõpe* (diploma programmes involving 3-4 years of study, ISCED 6/*5A*)
  - *Bakalaureuseõpe* (Bachelor's courses entailing four years of study, ISCED 6/*5A*)
  - *Magistriõpe* (Master's courses involving two years of study, ISCED 7/*5A*)
  - *Doktoriõpe* (doctoral studies entailing four years of study, ISCED 7/*6*)

- **Applied higher education institutions** *(Rakenduskõrgkoolid)* which offer the following:
  - the *Diplomiõpe* (diploma programmes involving 3-4 years of study, ISCED 6/*5A*) and
  - *Kutsekõrgharidus* (vocational higher education programmes involving 3-4 years of study, ISCED 5/*5B*).

The Estonian National Defence and Public Service Academy, and the Estonian Joint Military Educational Institutions (consisting of five colleges) are special higher education institutions responsible to the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

The diplomas awarded by those institutions have the same validity as the corresponding higher education diplomas obtained on satisfactory completion of the *Diplomiõpe*.

- **Vocational Education and Training Institutions** *(Kutseõppeasutused)* which also offer the *Kutsekõrgharidus*.

While the language of instruction is usually Estonian (for 83.7% of students), an increasing number of courses are given in English (for 3.0%), while some universities provide courses in Russian for the Estonian Russian minority (from which 13.7% of all students benefit). However, most of the literature studied is in English.

5.1. Admission requirements

There are both **general** and **specific** requirements providing access to studies at the first stage of higher education.

Approved by the Ministry of Education, **two general requirements** are common to higher education. They are a secondary school leaving certificate *(gümnaasiumi lõputunnistus)*, and a certificate of state/national examinations *(riigieksamitunnistus)* which provide admission to either diploma or Bachelor's courses. As regards the former, secondary education can be obtained, as already discussed, at either upper secondary schools *(gümnaasium)* or, alongside vocational education, at upper-secondary vocational schools from which students will graduate with the *lõputunnistus kutse- ja keskhariduse omandamise kohta* (vocational school certificate). For admission to vocational higher education *(Kutsekõrgharidus)*, the secondary vocational

education certificate is now required under the two June 1998 Laws on Vocational Education Institutions and Applied Higher Education Institutions, respectively while, for some courses, the requirements are the same as those for diploma or Bachelor's courses. The post-secondary qualification, *lõputunnistus keskerihariduse omandamise kohta* may also be regarded as equivalent to a secondary school leaving certificate.

Specific requirements depend on the higher education institution and area of specialisation. They may relate to the number of examinations, ranging from one to four, their form (written/oral or interview), or other considerations such as the average grade obtained on the secondary education leaving certificate, or the grade in a given subject.

In public universities, the basis for admission is the enrolment control number fixed by the State and covered by the state allocation. But universities have the right to take further students who pay for their places over and above this state quota.

Students wishing to continue their studies in Estonia on the strength of a foreign academic certificate, diploma or degree should apply directly for admission, or for recognition of their qualifications, to the higher education studies or ENIC/NARIC programme co-ordinators.

Estonia signed and ratified the Council of Europe and UNESCO convention on the recognition of diplomas and qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Lisbon, 1997).

5.2. Fees/Financial support for students

Public universities and publicly-maintained higher education institutions are essentially financed by the State. There is a state order for the number of students, and those not covered by it have to pay tuition fees, in the same way as students at self-funded private higher education institutions where the State may also lay claim to some places. Study loans are available for all full-time students.

5.3. Academic year

Divided into two semesters, the academic year begins in September and ends in the first half of June (although generally lectures finish in May). As a general rule, it comprises 40 weeks of lectures, seminars and practical training, along with a period for examinations.

The volume of study, or course workload, is measured in credits *(ainepunkt)*. One credit corresponds to forty hours (one study week) of coursework (lectures, seminars, practical training and independent work) completed by students. The normal study year comprises 40 credits.

5.4. Courses

5.4.1. Diploma studies and vocational higher education

Diploma study comprises one stage that normally lasts three to four years (120-160 credits). Some private business schools (such as the Estonian-American Business College and Audentes School) provide two stages of applied education, the first comprising two-year studies for a certificate, and the second, a further two years to diploma level. Diploma studies are provided at applied higher education institutions and universities.

Professional higher education may be provided at applied higher education institutions and post-secondary vocational schools. It lasts from three to four years (120-160 credits), one-third of which are devoted to practical training.

Both diploma study and professional higher education comprise specialised applied study, involving both theory and the acquisition of practical knowledge and skills.

5.4.2. Academic higher education

The 1995 Universities Act established three levels of academic study. In the first of them, the Bachelor's degree, students increase their level of general education and develop theoretical knowledge and skills for

their selected area of employment and further study. The course for a Bachelor's degree normally lasts four years (160 credits), and culminates in the defence of a thesis and the award of the *Diplom* with *Bakalaureuse kraad*.

The aim of the Master's Degree *(Magistri kraad)*, the second level, is to impart research skills in the selected area of specialisation so that students can undertake research that tests the theories, the comprehensiveness, and the relevance of the discipline for certain applications. A Bachelor's degree or equivalent diploma is a precondition for enrolment for a Master's degree, study for which normally lasts two years (80 credits). Work for the qualification is completed by defending a thesis of a theoretical or professional nature. Following graduation, students are awarded the Diplom with *magistri kraad*.

The third level of study is that of a doctorate *(Doktori kraad)* whose aim is to provide candidates with the knowledge and skills of an independent professional in the discipline concerned. Candidates will normally hold a Master's degree, or its equivalent, in their field. Study normally lasts four years (160 credits), and culminates in the defence of a doctoral thesis and the award of the *Diplom* with *Doktori* kraad.

Master's and doctoral degrees are of two kinds, academic or professional. An academic degree is awarded to university graduates who have written a thesis based on academic studies, while a professional degree is awarded to graduates who, following the defence of a final thesis or a state examination, have provided evidence of professional creativity at the appropriate level.

There are additional requirements for basic medical studies and teacher training. The normal time for the former is the total possible workload of six years (240 credits). The graduation level of basic medical study is equivalent to that of Master's studies, but does not entitle graduates to work immediately as doctors (medical practitioners). The training of teachers takes the form of ordinary diploma studies, or an additional course comprising 40 credits to follow Bachelor's or diploma studies.

Universities also may offer diploma programmes of the kind described in Section 6.4.1.

5.5. Assessment/Qualifications

General requirements for studying and teaching are set up by the so-called Standard of Higher Education. This is a collection of requirements drawn up by the Government for all stages of higher education to set goals for instruction geared to acquisition of a specialism, vocational or professional skills and general requirements for graduating from a university, including those related to the final thesis.

All higher education establishments are obliged to end subject courses with an examination or a preliminary examination, and separate stages of a given subject might also be examined.

The result of an examination is expressed in a grade or, in the case of a preliminary examination, as 'passed' or 'not passed' *(arvestatud or mitte arvestatud)*.

No unified grading system is used at higher education institutions in Estonia. The grades on the five-point scale are the same as those noted in Sections 3.3, and 4.2.3. (5, excellent; 4, good; 3, satisfactory; 2, poor; 1, unsatisfactory). The right to award diplomas or degrees lies with the state universities and other institutions of higher education.

5.6. Teachers

Those who teach applied subjects leading to a diploma normally have at least five years of specialist working experience. No less than half the subjects in the curriculum are taught by graduates with a Master's degree, or equivalent qualification, or by acknowledged creative artists in the field of arts and music. Teachers in professional higher education also normally have at least five years of work experience, in addition to their higher education qualifications.

No less than three-quarters of the curricular subjects for the Master's degree and no less than half of those for the Bachelor's degree are taught by academics with doctorates or equivalent qualifications, or by acknowledged creative artists in the field of art and music. All curricular subjects at doctoral level have to be supervised by holders of doctorates.

5.7. Statistics in 1996/97 – 1998/99

		1996/97	1997/98	1998/99
Diploma programmes	Total	7 772	10 481	14 571
	Public	4 255	5 849	8 284
	Private	3 510	4 632	6 287
Bachelor programmes	Total	18 770	20 489	22 157
	Public	16 639	17 518	18 281
	Private	2 131	2 971	3 876
Master programmes	Total	2 803	2 673	2 822
	Public	2 613	2 458	2 513
	Private	190	215	309
Doctorate programmes	Total	727	899	1 071
	Public	727	899	1 065
	Private			6

6. Adult education

6.1. Specific legislative framework

1) The 1993 Law on Adult Education *(Täiskasvanute koolituse seadus)*, amended in July 1998:
- the role of the Government of the Republic and the local municipalities;
- educational leave for employees;
- grants for in-service training of teachers and civil servants (no less than 3% of their annual salary fund);
- budgetary support for certain types of adult education to conduct research into the sector.

2) The procedure for applying for financial support for adult education from the national budget was approved by a 1994 government decree.

3) The 1995 Law on Public Service.

4) The 1994 Law on Social Protection of the Unemployed:
- labour market training and retraining.

5) The government decree on vocational education and training of the disabled:
- guarantees regarding opportunities to participate.

6) The fields, forms and procedure for organising adult education at vocational education institutions, as confirmed by the 1995 Minister of Education decree.

The 1993 Law on Income Tax:

- expenditure by employers on in-service employee training and retraining can be deducted from the income of trainees.

The government decree on deducting educational expenses from the annual income of the adult students concerned.

7) The procedure for issuing teaching/training permits, confirmed by a 1996 Ministry of Education decree:
- a permit has to be obtained if training is organised in a dangerous occupational field, or if it lasts more than 120 hours;

The 1998 government decree on the establishment of a National Council on Adult Education.

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6.1.1. Basic principles of the legislative framework

- Increasing the overall skills of people in a wide variety of occupations at different levels.
- Creation of the Estonian model of adult education based on the development needs of society, with guarantees enabling adults to access lifelong learning.
- Employees working under contract are eligible for study leave with no loss of salary.
- Tax benefits for employers who spend money on staff training and for individuals who spend money on their own training.
- A network of adult education institutions which is based on the local development of local people, and related to the socio-economical development of local municipalities and the region.
- Practical use of existing facilities, buildings, rooms and local intellectual potential.
- Support for local initiative and the provision of study opportunities closer to where people live.
- Training of trainers in Estonia and abroad.
- Development of a network of pilot training centres for vocational education and training, which would act as methodological centres (in co-operation with international partners and organisations of employees).

6.2. Administration

In general, adult education is guided and co-ordinated by the Ministry of Education within a small adult education division (with a staff of three) in the Vocational Education Department of the Ministry. The Ministry is responsible for curricular content, imposing quality standards and organising supervision on adult education provision within the system of formal education. Other Ministries co-ordinate training activities in their specific field. The National Labour Market Board is responsible for training and retraining of the unemployed.

In the autumn of 1994, the Ministry of Education founded the National Council on Adult Education whose existence was confirmed by the Government in autumn 1998.

Priority has gone to local initiatives, which have been supported by international co-operation, common projects for the training of trainers and the modernisation of curricula and equipment, legislation and financing. The Ministry provides the legislative framework for adult education, training permits for adult education institutions and, in co-operation with the National Council on Adult Education (*Riiklik Täiskasvanuhariduse Nõukogu*) and NGOs, organises project competitions for applying for support from the state budget.

NGOs have played an important part in adult education, international co-operation and the training and methodological guidance of adult educators:

- the Estonian Association of Adult Educators (Andras) founded in 1991 is responsible for the first round of project competition on:
  - long-term courses in national priority areas, applying for state budget support to cover the salaries of teachers (the priority areas in 1998 were the training of trainers, participation in democracy and civic education, national identity and the preservation of national culture, problems related to EU accession, environmental protection and an increase in the educational influence of families).
  - adult education research projects.

- Founded in 1994, the Estonian Association of People's Education *(Eesti Vabahariduslíit)* is responsible for the first round of applications/projects for a contribution from the state budget to the salaries of teachers and heads within adult education institutions.
- The Estonian Society of Study Circles *Eesti Õpiringide Selts* founded in 1994 is responsible for the first round of project competition among study circles (study on priority areas).

NGOs present their proposals regarding support to the National Council on Adult Education which makes the final decision. State budget support to adult education institutions and research is allocated via the budget of the Ministry of Education.

Among other adult education NGOs are the Adult Educators Association (*Vabahariduse Õpetajate Assotsiatsioon*), founded in 1992, the Open Education Association (*Avatud Hariduse Liit*), founded in 1991 and local societies on education and culture.

Estonia does not have a national system for employee qualifications. The social partners and professional bodies are currently involved in the creation of such a system, paying increasing attention to the importance of vocational education and training.

6.3. Funding

Depending on the customer, adult education/continuing education can be financed from different sources, namely the national budget, local government budgets, firms or contributions from private individuals.

- The National Budget provides support for the following:
  - the professional training of teachers and public administrators (at least 3% of the payroll fund for the relevant category of staff);
  - part-time study (evening and correspondence courses) at upper-secondary level, in vocational education and training or in higher education institutions;
  - training and retraining of the unemployed;
  - Estonian language consultations and tests (with a view to examinations) for the non-Estonian-speaking population;
  - the methodological centres of umbrella organisations bringing together teachers and trainers of adults, such as Andras, the Estonian People's Education League, etc.;
  - the activities of the Adult Education Council;
  - trade unions providing training for employees in legal and organisational matters (800-900 people benefited from seminars lasting two to three days in 1996/97).
  - adult education research;
  - long-term courses (56 hours or more) in areas or for target groups identified as national priorities by the National Adult Education Council (support contributes to the salaries of the teachers involved);
  - study circle activities;
  - the salaries of heads and teachers at adult education institutions.

It should be noted that national budget support under headings 8) to 11) in the above list is allocated on the basis of a public research or training project competition.

- Local government budgets provide support for the professional training of local government staff and the training and retraining of the unemployed, as well as indirect support to local adult education institutions.
- Firms can organise training themselves or pay for courses for training and retraining their staff.
- Private individuals can pay for courses that match their needs and interests.

6.4. Organisation

Adult education and continuing training is provided by the following:

- firms themselves;
- public universities;
- state-owned and municipal education institutions (adult gymnasiums and vocational education institutions where training takes the form of evening or extramural classes, or correspondence courses);
- private and voluntary organisations such as trade unions;
- private universities, training companies and VET institutions;
- adult education institutions (mostly working as day folk high schools).

Public and state-owned Institutions

In spite of difficulties, most public universities and institutions for applied higher and vocational education provide work-related adult education. Training is conducted in the form of evening or open university/correspondence-type courses. In the case of correspondence courses, adult students enrol for a full Diploma, Bachelor's, Master's or Doctor's course and receive the corresponding certification on graduation. In the Open University, they can take full courses or a part of any subject that interests them. Within a certain period – usually longer than in the case of full-time students – they may be awarded a diploma or degree, provided they have met all the normal graduation requirements. Short-term professional training courses are also offered.

Evening, extramural or correspondence courses for adults at publicly-maintained gymnasiums and vocational and higher education institutions are free of charge for the trainees taking part. Work-related continuing training or retraining courses in these institutions are conducted on the basis of self-funding by participants or firms with an interest in the training.

Continuing training and retraining of state officials, teachers and the registered unemployed is government-financed with funds specially allocated from the national budget.

According to employers, personal qualities such as maturity, independence, and the ability to take decisions, communicate well and exercise responsibility, are just as important for employees as overhauling inadequate and obsolete skills, since the former are often critical factors in finding and keeping a job.

Work-related continuing training is also organised by certain special institutions. The government-funded Estonian Institute of Public Administration organises training for local and public administration officials; the Estonian Management Institute receives income from courses for senior management, in accordance with requests from companies and public authorities; and the Training Centre of Eesti Energia (Estonian Energy Company) organises training for employees working in the energy sector.

6.4.1. Measures to promote adult education and training

Formal general/regular education

- It is possible to obtain the upper-secondary general education certificate in one or more subjects in the system of adult gymnasiums.
- It is also possible to obtain an open university higher education diploma via the universities.

Education for employment

Almost all higher and vocational education institutions provide courses for adults.

- There are **pilot centres for vocational adult education** with highly developed technology in priority areas. They include establishments with modern equipment, teaching materials, and teachers who have training experience abroad (centres develop programmes and offer in-service training for all teachers of economics, for adults and the unemployed).

There are now pilot centres for geodesy, construction, and hotel and food service specialists as a result of co-operation with Finland, and for metalwork and welding specialists thanks to collaboration with Germany. The Estonian Labour Market Training Centre has also been established jointly with Swedish AMU International. Under the PHARE VET reform project (1996-1998), different areas of specialization were developed in no less than 13 pilot schools.

Other opportunities

State budget support is allocated to NGO methodological and development centres and the Estonian Society of Study Circles, and also covers the salaries of heads or teachers in educational institutions for the general public, as well as of those who teach long-term courses in the priority areas.

6.5. Statistics

- Different sources indicate that there are currently over 900 private and voluntary associations in the adult education sector (excluding in-service training facilities within firms or state institutions).
- There is no data in official educational statistics on *short adult training courses* provided in VET or higher education institutions.
- A 1997 survey of small and medium-sized enterprises revealed that 31% of all respondents had attended courses organised by private companies, 13% at entrepreneurship or business advice centres, 8% had been on courses abroad, and 2% on those provided by the Labour Market Board.
- In 1997, local employment offices paid for training by 180 training providers (150 training institutions, including 24 publicly-maintained schools). This is retraining financed through the Labour Market Board for around 9100 unemployed people in 117 areas of specialization, 8895 of whom finished the training and 6246 (70%) got a job.

– Research between 1994 and 1997 suggests increasing participation in continuing education and training courses, rising from 15% to 25 %.

It is very likely that training is affordable for a growing group of people who actively make use of it. The present continuing training system is more favourable to younger people with higher education, who are well placed in the social hierarchy and whose financial circumstances are above average.

Adults in the regular education system, 1998/99

	Evening and correspondence	Their share of all students	Evening	Correspondence
Basic education	1 157	0.6%	885	272
Upper secondary general	4 926	13.2%	2 901	2 025
Vocational education total	3 904	12.9%	1 575	2 329
Vocational secondary	759	4.1%	59	700
Post secondary technical	3 145	26.6%	1 516	1 629
Higher education	6 515	16.0%	3 484	3 031
Diploma courses	4 561	31.3%	2 397	2 164
Bachelor courses	1 775	8.0%	1 030	745
Master courses	162	5.7%	51	111
Doctoral courses	17	1.6%	6	11

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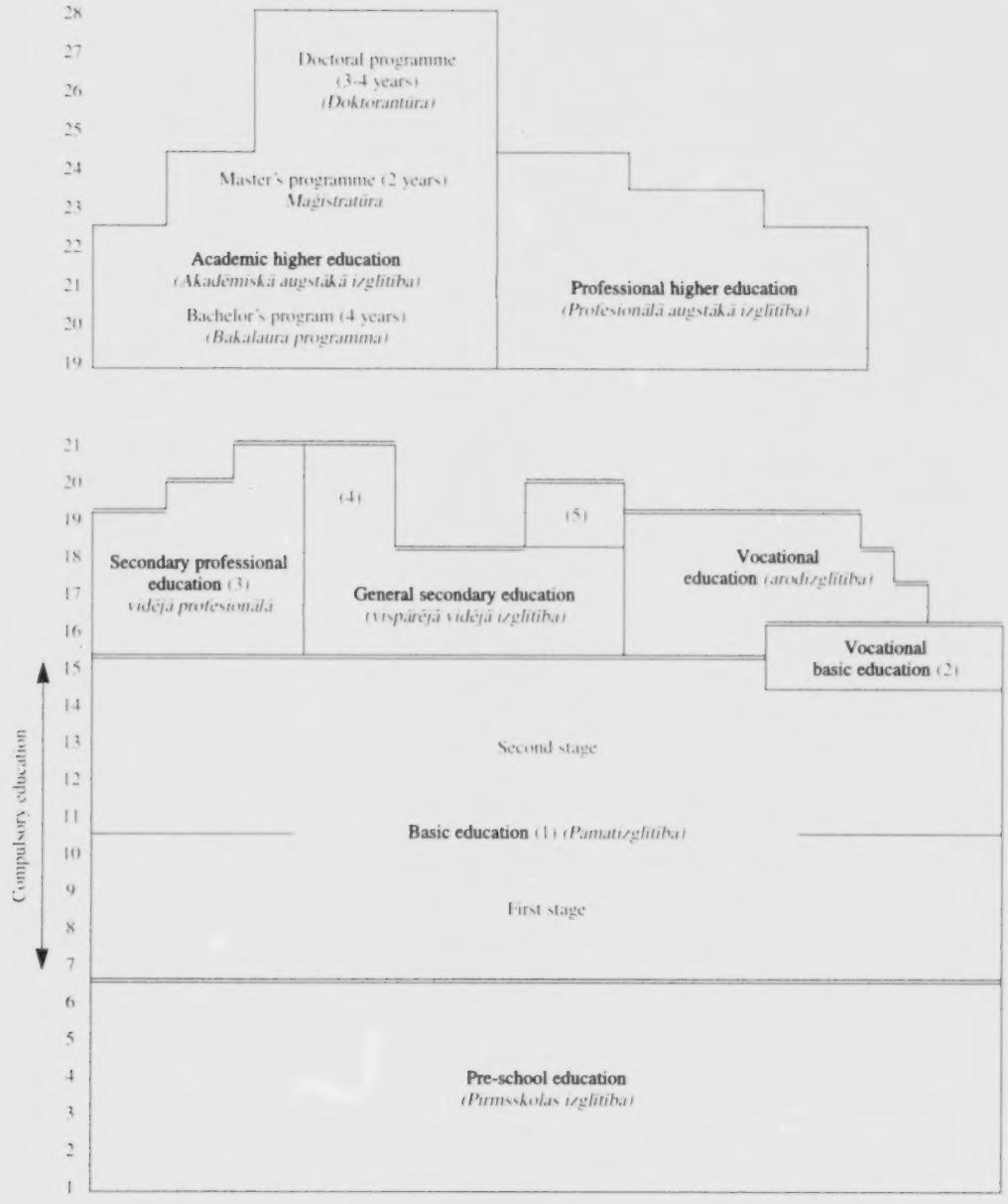
Latvia



(1) Basic schools last nine years with a four-year first stage and a five-year second stage.
(2) Two-year vocational basic education *(arodpamatizglītība)*.
(3) At present in Latvia, secondary professional education is called *Vidējā speciālā* (secondary specialised education).
(4) Secondary specialised education has a three-year programme after general secondary education.
(5) Vocational programmes after secondary education can last one to two years.

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Latvia

1. Responsibilities and administration

1.1. Background

The Republic of Latvia regained its independence in 1991 after 51 years under the control of the Soviet Union. Since then, the Republic has had to accomplish several difficult tasks, such as consolidation of a sovereign State and the transition to democracy and a market economy. Three parliamentary elections have been held – in 1993, 1995 and 1998.

At the start of 1998, the population of Latvia was 2 458 403 in a total area of 64 589 km^2 (38 inhabitants/km^2). Of this population, 55.5% are Latvians, 32.4% Russians, 3.9% Belorussians, 2.9% Ukrainians, 2.2% Poles, 1.3% Lithuanians and 1.7% other nationalities.

Latvia is now an independent and democratic Republic whose governing principles are set out in its *Satversme* (Constitution) of 1922, but with some recent amendments in 1994, 1996, 1997 and 1998. One hundred members of its *Saeima* (Parliament) are directly elected by secret ballot for a three-year term. The *Saeima* enacts all legislation, and elects the President of the Republic, also for three years. Local government is exercised by 26 *rajoni* (districts).

Education policy in Latvia is based on the 1991 Education Act. Educational institutions may be state (central or local), or private. The right to education in the official state language (Latvian) is guaranteed by the 1991 Act, while the right to education in other languages is also enjoyed by Latvian residents of other nationalities, in accordance with the Language Act. In national schools, the language of instruction from grade 1 upwards is Latvian which has also to be learnt by pupils in schools providing instruction in other languages, the main one being Russian.

1.2. Basic principles

The 1991 Act sets out the basic responsibilities for educational policy that are assumed by the different branches of government, including the Cabinet of Ministers, the Ministry of Education and Science, other ministries and departments and the municipalities. It also refers to the rights and obligations of education and training institutions, teachers, trainees, students and pupils, the financing of education, and the right to education of foreign citizens and stateless persons. However, since 1991, the Education Act has been revised (in 1995 and 1998), and additional legislation relating to general and higher education, institutional licensing and accreditation, has been introduced. The Act, in its present form, takes effect from the summer of 1999.

The basic principles of modern education in Latvia combine values that are humanistic, democratic, individualistic and national. Its goal is for all young men and women to achieve their full potential as intelligent, creative, cultured and responsible citizens. It also naturally seeks to train skilled competitive professionals who can make a valuable contribution to national well-being, and to encourage the development of lifelong learning in all fields of art, science and technology.

1.3. Distribution of responsibilities

The structure of education management, which operates at national, municipal and institutional levels, corresponds to the administrative structure of the State.

All relevant legislation, including the national budget for education and the budget for the Ministry of Education and Science, is confirmed by the *Saiema* (Parliament). Regulations are invariably approved by the

Cabinet of Ministers, following discussion and agreement in the Committee of State and Social Affairs, although regulations regarding educational institutions may be approved by the Ministry of Education and Science.

The operation and curricula of schools are determined by regulations based on the Education Act, and institutions run by municipalities throughout the country implement the decisions of their local government authorities while, at the same time, working in close cooperation with the Education State Inspectorate *(Izglitibas Valsts inspekcija)*.

School curricula are drafted in line with a model designed by the Ministry of Education and Science, and incorporate national standards for each subject. However, within this framework, individual institutions may design their own syllabus, and even introduce new subjects.

1.4. Administration

Institutions at every stage, or educational level, of the Latvian education system enjoy a certain measure of autonomy. The 1991 Education Act provides for the following distribution of responsibility by administrative level of authority.

Central level

The Cabinet of Ministers determines funding levels for all educational and training institutions, as well as minimum salaries and salary scales for institutional staff. Besides approving the samples and acquisition procedures regarding the licensing and accreditation documents required by educational and training institutions, as well as the certificates awarded by them, the Cabinet takes decisions regarding the setting up, reorganisation and closure of higher education institutions, research establishments or other educational institutions run by one of the central government ministries.

Most state education policy is implemented by the Ministry of Science and Education. The Ministry issues the licenses and credentials needed to open mainstream educational institutions or change their status. It also determines educational standards, as well as teacher training content and procedures, and concludes international cooperation agreements in the field of education.

However, other ministries and departments, such as the Ministries of Agriculture, Welfare and Culture, also establish education and training institutions. In accordance with broad guidelines, they work out and approve their regulations, determine education content in certain specific subjects, and oversee the administration and financing of the institutions concerned. In cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science, they also contribute to the licensing and programme accreditation of the educational institutions under its supervision.

The Government controls the quality of the education system mainly in two ways: first, through the licensing of educational institutions and the accreditation of curricula; and, secondly, through the assessment and formal accreditation of teaching activity.

Local level

Local authorities are responsible for all boarding-schools, special schools for mentally handicapped children, children's homes and centres for after-school activities (such as supervised games, theatre and painting outside normal school hours), which are not administered by the central government or privately maintained. It thus establishes, reorganises or closes such institutions, in liaison with the Ministry of Education and Science (or other appropriate ministry), and ensures respect for educational legislation within the area under its jurisdiction. Each local authority also prepares proposals for all the others, to optimise the operation of the entire network of institutions for which they are responsible. In addition, authorities appoint and dismiss heads of the institutions within their area (with the approval of the Ministry of Education and Science), and provide organisational assistance to them, through the supply of educational and methodological literature, as well as other forms of support.

Cities and districts are responsible for pre-school training institutions, primary schools, basic schools and secondary schools, with the exception of education and training institutions run directly by the central government, or those that are privately maintained. The authorities concerned have to ensure that they supervise and maintain at least as many such schools as the number prescribed by the minimum standards of

the Ministry of Education and Science. The authorities register children who have reached the age of compulsory school attendance (between six and seven), allocating them to schools of basic general education.

Institutional level

Education and training institutions are governed by their head persons (headmaster, rector, etc.) and their administrative staff, in accordance with the educational legislation applicable to them. Institutions are relatively independent as regards the organisation and implementation of their work, the drawing up of internal regulations, the appointment and responsibilities assumed by their teaching and technical staff and the use of their resources.

The founder of an education or training institution may be the central government, a local government authority, any other legal entity or a person. Founders delegate to their heads the responsibilities of institutional financial management, including the determination of staff salaries in line with the regulations approved by the Cabinet of Ministers. In accordance with the regulations of institutions, councils now have to be set up within them to help settle various issues related to their teaching or administrative activity, including the use of financial resources.

Rectors of higher educational institutions are elected in accordance with the statutes of the institution concerned, although their appointment is subject to the approval of, first, the *Saeima* and then the Cabinet of Ministers. The heads of private educational and training institutions are appointed and dismissed by their founders (in this case legal entities or private individuals), in accordance with institutional regulations or statutes.

1.5. Inspection/Supervision/Guidance

The Educational State Inspectorate is an institution responsible to the Ministry of Education and Science for which it ensures that the activities of all educational institutions comply with national interests. An inspector is appointed by the Ministry to each local authority throughout Latvia.

The Inspectorate carries out the following responsibilities:

- monitoring the compliance of educational institutions with the relevant legislation, regulations and standards;
- supervision of the educational process, including implementation of the educational guidelines;
- contributing to work on (state and non-state) examinations and tests, and monitoring procedures in this area of activity;
- analysing institutional operations, and formulating proposals for their refinement;
- ensuring that local authorities, educational institutions and the Ministry of Education and Science are in regular contact, and securing feedback on the implementation of educational legislation and regulations;
- running the work of accreditation commissions and procedures in schools, and participating in the accreditation of vocational and secondary professional institutions;
- participating in the assessment of the work of head teachers, and managing regional commissions for their certification;
- ensuring respect, in institutions, for the educational standards defined by central government.

A single inspector is responsible for all educational institutions supervised by a given local authority, subject to the following exceptions:

- one inspector is responsible for the institutions of professional education in the city of Riga;
- an accreditation commission has been established for special schools in the city;
- an accreditation commission has also been set up for Latvia's Polish schools.

Experts, including teachers and ministerial and school board specialists, are invited to take part in the work of the accreditation commissions of city district schools, as well as in school inspections.

1.6. Financing

The state financing of education accounted for 5.8% of GDP in 1997. It has been channelled into basic financing and developmental expenses.

Basic financing, which amounts to 97% of the total educational budget, covers the expenses needed to maintain educational institutions, staff salaries, transport, energy and other resources.

Developmental expenditure is associated with implementation of larger scale projects and strategic changes in educational activity. Instead of being used for institutional maintenance, it is earmarked for the further training of teachers and the purchase of equipment. Most such expenditure is covered by state investment.

Educational institutions, including national minority schools and centres for after-school activities, under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Science are funded out of the central and local government budgets. In these institutions, central government expenditure is earmarked for staff salaries, including those of teachers, employer social assistance contributions, scholarships, contributions to in-service teacher training and transport concessions (including school bus services, reimbursement to parents of the cost of sending their children to school by public transport in rural areas, and reduced rates for the use of city public transport by pupils and students).

Educational institutions supervised by other ministries receive a special share of the central government budget for their administration.

In educational institutions run by local authorities, central government resources contribute to the salaries of teaching staff, employer social assistance contributions, partial contributions to the purchase of textbooks, transport subsidies and capital construction subsidies exclusively for building or rebuilding school premises.

Central and local government budget allocations for the operation of educational and training institutions are based on estimates by them of their budgetary requirements.

In all cases, the 'employment salary fund' (ESF) for teaching staff is provided by the founder of the educational institution concerned (whether the central government, local government or private bodies).

The minimum salary of teaching staff, or the salary scales dependent on the qualifications, length of service and seniority (position) of individual staff members, are determined by the central government. If employment salary funds permit, an institution's management (including its director, administration and labour union and, in some cases, its local authority) may fix higher salaries for teaching staff.

In order to ensure that local government authorities can budget for salary funds, a subsidy is provided from the central government budget through a so-called Municipal Equalisation Fund, in accordance with the number of students, and certain considerations related to regional development. This subsidy covers the total outlay on employment salary funds for teaching staff in all schools (other than special institutions for mentally or physically handicapped children), and around 95% of the fund contributions to salaries for staff at centres for after-school activities.

Money for teaching staff salaries and social assistance contributions in pre-school educational institutions supervised by local government, as well as pre-school groups in basic schools, is provided by the authorities responsible for them.

The State partly contributes to the purchase of textbooks by schools at a rate directly proportional to their pupil enrolment. It also invites tenders for the subsidised publication of textbooks for special schools (such as those requiring Braille or material for mentally and physically handicapped children), and for the preparation of books in the wake of sudden demand, so that when a new subject is introduced into the curriculum, all pupils can study it.

The material and technical facilities of educational institutions are developed and improved, by means of central and local government budgetary resources, as well as other sources of funding.

Local authorities are independent in formulating the development policy for the network of educational institutions under their control, and determining the salary funds for each of them. They are also responsible for use of the central government subsidy on which they report to the Ministry of Education and Science.

The funding of vocational education is based upon the field of specialisation at a training institution – for example, training in carpentry usually needs more funding than a secretarial course – and the number of student groups enrolled for the field concerned. The breakdown of the total annual budget is 52% from the Ministry of Education and Science, 14% from other ministries and central government bodies, and 34% from local authorities.

Indeed, institutions of both vocational and higher education are mainly supervised by central government through the Ministry of Education and Science or other ministries, each of which draws on its budget to finance the establishments for which it is responsible. Even where vocational institutions are run by local authorities, the Ministry of Education and Science covers their salaries, and social assistance contributions.

Higher education is financed from the central government budget, from income earned through the economic activity of individual institutions in the sector and from private endowments.

The state contribution provides exclusively for the advanced training of specialists in accordance with the national interest. The use of other income is determined by the higher education institution itself.

All expenses incurred by special institutions (for mentally or physically handicapped children), including their individual teaching staff salary funds, are covered from the central government budget.

Money for the salaries of teaching staff in local government adult education centres comes from the local authorities concerned.

1.7. Advisory/consultative/participatory bodies

Several advisory bodies have been set up and attached to the Ministry of Education and Science.

The **Centre for Educational Curricula and Examinations (CECE)** is responsible for developing curricular content, diagnosis and control at levels appropriate to pre-school, basic, general secondary and special education. The Centre establishes official norms related to matters such as plans for lessons, standards, examination materials and systems for assessing the results of teaching. It also offers a consultancy service and information on curricular issues, for the benefit of professional unions and associations of teachers, deputy head teachers in education and training[1], and heads of locally-based methodological unions for teachers of specific subject areas.

The **Centre of Vocational Education (CVE)** is concerned with the content of professional education and the methodological support its application requires. In the same kind of way as the CECE, this Centre carries out the preparation and analysis of draft written material (including teaching plans and curricula) for vocational basic or secondary professional education, as well as the general development of professional skills. The CVE also monitors appropriate coordination of the content of secondary professional education with that of higher professional and general secondary education. The Centre is authorised to provide assistance to teachers, coordinate the work of methodological unions in certain specific branches of professional activity, and cooperate with other ministries, professional associations and chambers.

The **Teacher Training Support Centre (TTSC)** is responsible for implementing and supporting government policy for the promotion of teacher training and the development of teaching skills. In so doing, the Centre undertakes the preparation, translation and circulation of teaching materials, along with resource materials for teacher training and other forms of support relevant to the development of professional skills and education of the general public.

Finally, a **Consultative Council for Teacher Training and Professional Skills Development** has also been established for the purpose of improving and developing the system of in-service teacher training.

1.8. Private schools

The 1991 Education Act created opportunities for private education and training institutions to operate once more in Latvia. As long as they have material facilities, methodological provision and staff resources that match those of the publicly-maintained sector, private schools can be set up by persons or legal entities. Licences to establish them are issued by the Ministry of Education and Science, and they may receive a state subsidy to cover up to 80% of the expenditure defined as normal for an institution of the particular type, or category, to which they belong.

The activity of private institutions is monitored by the state inspectorate to ensure that it is legal and complies with national policies for education. The inspectorate have also established a commission for each local area responsible for accrediting schools. Licences to establish them are issued by the Ministry of Education and Science.

In 1998/99 there were 59 private schools with 3144 pupils. They comprised 10 kindergartens, 11 elementary schools, 21 basic schools (to ninth grade) and 17 secondary schools (to 12th grade).

1 Head teachers themselves do not normally make use of the service, since their work is more purely administrative in nature.

2. Pre-school education

Pre-school education is an integral part of the educational system. Its aim is to develop the self-confidence of children through the awareness of their own actions, emotions, desires and interests, and to channel their emerging aptitudes into participatory activity respectful of general human values.

The first group of pre-schools are general institutions or kindergartens for those aged between one and seven, play groups and consultative centres. The second group comprises similar but special schools for children with apparent handicaps.

Although no special tests are taken by children, parents have to submit a health certificate for them prior to their registration in pre-school institutions. Registration in special kindergartens is dependent on the conclusions of a medical/educational commission.

Depending on their pupil enrolment, institutions may be divided into a maximum of 12 groups. Children aged one to three are always placed in groups of ten; those aged between three and seven in groups of 16.

Although children are offered the next stage of education in the nearest basic school to their home, parents can choose any other school if they wish. Some pre-schools provide the first grade of basic schooling on their own premises while, in 1996/97, 148 kindergarten groups were housed in basic schools.

2.1. Organisation of the pre-school

In pre-school institutions, there is one daily class. While the length of the school day depends on the capacity of the school building, kindergartens are open for 12 hours a day on average. The maximum length of classes increases with the age of children as follows: 15 minutes (children aged up to two), 25 minutes (2-3), 35 minutes (3-4), 50 minutes (4-5), one hour (5-6) and 75 minutes for children aged between six and seven.

Pre-schools may organise groups for children of the same age, or groups of different ages between two and four. The kind of group formed depends on the wishes of parents and varies from one local authority to the next. Children in groups of the same age are transferred to the next (higher-age) group automatically each year.

Publicly maintained pre-school education is financed by the local authorities, while special pre-school institutions receive subsidies from the central government.

In publicly-maintained institutions, parents pay an amount directly proportional to the cost of providing meals. In private ones, they additionally pay a registration fee on their children's behalf. Indeed, the private pre-school sector is somewhat expensive, and has been developing slowly.

New pre-school institutions may be founded by local authorities in the area under their jurisdiction, private persons, municipal services (such as those for transport) and firms. In 1998/1999, there were 10 private kindergartens.

2.2. Curriculum/Assessment

The pre-school curriculum comprises 15 subjects, including mathematics, speech development, literature, visual arts, music, and physical training, with a strong emphasis on swimming. Special attention is also paid to the acquisition of Latvian and foreign languages.

Parents may choose a pre-school which uses languages of instruction other than Latvian (usually Russian or Polish), if one is available in their area. While Latvian is taught at all institutions and used as the language of instruction in 376 of them, 71 have Russian as their main language, and a further 135 include some groups that use Latvian and others, Russian.

Play is central to the pre-school activity organised by teachers, using appropriate teaching resources to support their work which is based on the idea that the environment of children is a basic factor in their cognitive development.

2.3. Teachers

Trained pre-school teachers hold a higher education diploma as a pre-school psychologist/educator.

Persons who have satisfactorily completed secondary education may also teach in pre-schools, as long as they continue their training at a higher teacher training institution, by correspondence or at evening classes. Courses last for four to five years.

Secondary education qualifications alone may be acceptable where there is a serious teacher shortage. The Ministry of Education and Science stipulates that teaching practice for pre-school teachers – as well as for their heads – should last 20 weeks. Just two days a year have to be spent in further in-service training courses.

2.4. Statistics 1998/99

Pupils	66 143
Teachers	8 647
Institutions	586
Pupil/teacher ratio	7.2
Pupil/group ratio	19.0

Source: Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, 1998.

After 1991, as a result of reforms aimed at enabling children to benefit from their home environment for a longer period before attending school, the number of pre-school institutions declined. In 1990, there were 1115 kindergartens attended by 83% of children in the corresponding age-group, while in 1993, 640 kindergartens were attended by around 25%. More recently, this percentage has significantly risen again standing at 38% in 1997. However, the overall decrease is the result of staff salary funds being transferred to local authority budgets. In some cases, this led to a fall in the number of pupil groups within these institutions, or their complete closure.

3. Compulsory education

One of the most essential tasks of compulsory education is to solve problems associated with the fact that a large proportion of the population (45%) do not speak Latvian, satisfactory command of which is one of the preconditions for Latvian citizenship. For this reason, acquisition of Latvian in school is very important.

Basic School

This level has a definite structure inherited from the period of the first Republic (up to 1940) and transformed under Soviet occupation. With restoration of the independent Republic in 1991, the Education Act of the same year was partly inspired by both.

Compulsory schooling lasts from the age of six or seven until basic schooling has been satisfactorily completed between the ages of 15 and 18. Basic school *(pamatskola)* consists of two stages:

- The **first stage**, also known as primary school *(sākumskola)*, comprising grades 1-4;
- The **second stage** (grades 5-9).

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Some schools only provide for grades 1-6, incorporating the whole of the primary stage but with the following stage incomplete. Others may offer the full nine-year curriculum covering both stages.

In addition, there are vocational programmes in some basic schools. The curriculum of the basic school can be also acquired at evening shift schools. In 1997/98 there were 2775 pupils studying in these evening shift schools, most of them at grades 7-9.

For children with special needs, compulsory education is offered in special basic schools.

There are no entrance examinations to basic schools, and in those founded by central or local government, there is no tuition fee, as is often the case of private basic schools.

Classes are coeducational, and their normal maximum size is 36, although in special cases this number may be increased with the approval of the state inspectorate. The size of a school depends on the ability of its local authority to maintain it, as well as the number of school children in the area under its jurisdiction.

3.1. Organisation of the school

In general, basic schools accommodate several sets of classes. However, in those with fewer children, either joint classes are formed, or there may be only one set of classes for a particular age-group. The length of the school day depends on the number of lessons for a given class, and may also be longer if teaching takes place in shifts to prevent too many classes being given at the same time.

In some basic schools, pupils are encouraged towards professional education in their final year.

Although schools plan their own timetable, the Education Act stipulates maximum weekly teaching workloads, as follows: grade (year) 1, 20 lessons; grade 2, 22 lessons; grades 3-4, 24 lessons; grade 5, 30 lessons; grade 6, 32 lessons; grades 7 to 8, 34 lessons.

There are two semesters – from 1 September to Christmas, and from the beginning of January until the end of May. These dates, together with holiday periods, have been laid down by the Ministry of Education and Science.

Grades are generally organised in accordance with age, but with some exceptions, as in the case of children who for any reason, have attended school earlier than usual or remained in the same grade for a second year. Schools with several parallel classes, may also divide them in accordance with an emphasis on certain subjects within the curriculum.

Teachers are free to choose their books and other teaching resources, with several books used for almost all subjects.

3.2. Curriculum

All subjects in basic school are taught on an equal level to all students, except in schools with more intensive provision in foreign languages or music. Basic schools may also enable pupils to prepare for specialisation in a specific subject.

Schools may adopt various teaching methods, including independent work by pupils or group work. Recently, methods have become diversified, with a special emphasis on active learning.

Model curriculum for the 1997/98 school year

Model curricula are prepared at the Ministry of Education and Science, while the specific curriculum for each school is drawn up by the institution itself, taking account of educational requirements, pupil interests and preferences, and possibilities offered by the school, including the qualifications of its teachers.

Model curriculum and lesson plan for basic schools (primary stage)

Teaching subject	Number of lessons per week for each grade			
	1		4	
1. Latvian	8	2*	8-9	4*
2. First foreign language	–		3-4	
3. Minority language	7*		8-9*	
4. Mathematics	4	4*	4-5	4-5*
5. Environment and nature studies	1	1*	1	1*
6. Music	2	1-2*	2	1-2*
7. Visual art and handicraft	3	2-3*	3	3*
8. Physical training	2	2*	2-3	2-3*
9. Maximum load per student	20		24	
10. Optional classes	2		3	

* Model curricula in pre-schools with language of instruction other than Latvian.

Model curriculum and lesson plan for basic schools

	Teaching subject	Number of lessons per week for each grade
	5	9
1. Latvian	3-4	3-4
2. Literature	2-3	2-3
3. First foreign language	4	2-3
4. Second foreign language	–	3-4
5. History	2	
6. Social studies Introduction into economy Civil studies	– –	– 1-2
7. Mathematics	5-6	5-6
8. Computer studies	–	–
9. Biology	1-2	2
10. Geography	–	2
11. Physics	–	2
12. Chemistry	–	2
13. Music	2	1-2
14. Visual art	2	1
15. Housekeeping or trade	2	2
16. Physical training	2-3	2-3
Maximum load	30	34
Optional classes	4	4

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3.3. Assessment/Guidance

Pupils receive a report at the end of each semester. Later, on completion of basic school, they sit school-leaving examinations and are awarded certificates testifying to their knowledge of the subjects they have studied.

From grades 1 to 3, children are assessed orally in each subject. Then, from grade 4, their knowledge is assessed in accordance with a 10-point scale. Proficiency in and attitudes towards subjects are assessed by teachers both in the course of their daily activity, and by regular testing. This rating is recorded in a results book, with a final result based on all assessment conducted in the course of the year. However, there is no special certification to mark the end of grade 4, in a way comparable to the full completion of basic school at grade 9.

Satisfactory results are needed for pupils to progress from one grade to the next and enter secondary school. If their results are unsatisfactory, their parents decide whether they should repeat a year or move on to the next grade. Besides being used to try and analyse the reasons for unsatisfactory school attainment and adapt teaching methods where appropriate, results also provide general information on educational performance throughout the country.

Some local authorities organise so-called 'remedial classes' for children who have been absent from school for a long period (the precise definition of which varies from one municipality to the next).

Examinations are compulsory for all pupils about to leave basic school, and passing them is a precondition for award of the basic school certificate. Responsibility for them lies with the Centre for Educational Curricula and Examinations.

3.4. Teachers

At basic school level, teachers work on either grades 1-4 or 5-9 and, in the case of the latter, also specialise in a particular subject or limited group of subjects. Teachers of grades 1-4 teach all major subjects, except art, music and physical education.

The status of teaching staff depends on the provision of their school but, in general, institutions try to offer their staff full-time permanent work.

Eight higher education institutions in Latvia provide accredited curricula for teacher training.

The training concerned lasts four to five years, depending on the qualifications aimed at. By means of teaching practice, schools are in regular contact with the institutions that train their teachers. The Ministry of Education and Science stipulates that teaching practice for primary school and special school teachers, as well as for heads of schools, should last 20 weeks. For second-stage basic school teachers (grades 5-9) and teachers of comprehensive and special subjects (including music and art), practice is meant to last 12 weeks.

In accordance with the 1995 Higher Education Institutions Act, teachers who satisfactorily complete their courses, are awarded a diploma testifying the level of education and subjects for which they are qualified to work.

According to the 1998 Education Act, all teachers have the right to engage in appropriate further training of a total 30 days in a three-year period

The teaching workload is specified in regulations established by the Cabinet of Ministers, and is now 21 lessons a week.

The workload of teachers includes not only classroom activity, but the correction of written work in mathematics and languages. School heads conclude employment contracts with teachers for specified periods of time and their corresponding workloads.

The continuing education of qualified teachers takes the form of full-time extramural courses, 'self-education' and external studies.

At present, all university and non-university higher education institutions, irrespective of whether they provide training for teachers as such, are involved in the continuing education of teachers through the provision of Bachelor's and Master's study programmes. Continuing education courses are also offered at local government

learning centres, regional teacher education centres, and by other facilities or means, such as the following:

- continuing education support centres for teachers (including vocational education and training centres for those who teach in vocational education);
- international support from different organisations and programmes (including the British Council, TEMPUS projects, PHARE, bilateral cooperation projects with Germany and Denmark, the Canada College Association, and Baltic and Nordic country cooperation projects).

In law, employees are themselves responsible for upgrading their qualifications and skills to match work requirements, but employers have to provide them with the opportunity to do so. Teachers therefore share responsibility with the local authorities responsible for their schools.

Every year, the Ministry of Education and Science invites proposals from local authorities for curricula for continuing education. Following its formal approval of recommendations by an assessment commission, it then awards funding to accepted proposals from a special state budget for this purpose, from which an average 6 000 teachers have benefited annually. Some of the same budget is also earmarked for a Teachers' Continuing Education Support Fund from which 3 000 teachers on average receive partial compensation for their tuition fees for extramural or postgraduate courses. And every year, a further 8 500 teachers receive funding from local authority budgets, international projects and other resources.

3.5. Statistics

1998/99

Pupils (Grade 1-4)	141 396
Pupils (Grade 5-9)	159 675
Pupils in Basic schools	301 071
Teachers (Grade 1-4)	9 191
Teachers (Grade 5-9)	15 615
Teachers in Basic schools	24 806
Primary schools (sakumskola)	100
Basic schools (pamatskola)	534
Pupil/teacher ratio (Grade 1-4)	15.4
Pupil/teacher ratio (Grade 5-9)	10.2
Pupil/teacher ratio in Basic schools	12.1
Pupil/class ratio (Grade 1-4)	19.0
Pupil/class ratio (Grade 5-9)	19.0
Pupil/class in Basic schools	19.0

Source: Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, 1998; Ministry of Education and Science, 1999.

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4. Secondary education

The term secondary education concerns schooling from grades 10 to 12, which is not compulsory.

Secondary education *(vidējā izglītība)* may be general or special education (for children with special needs), or secondary specialised education (see the introductory diagram).

The aim of general secondary education is to impart the knowledge and skills needed for subsequent higher education, to further the all-round development of students and prepare them for life in a democratic society. Secondary specialised schools and some secondary general schools are also orientated towards certain professions.

Although students in secondary education are usually aged 16-18, there is not normally an upper age-limit.

There are central and local government secondary schools, and also some private ones.

In order to be admitted to secondary school, pupils have to hold the basic education certificate, although some schools will impose yet further requirements. Attendance at central and local government institutions is free, whereas private ones may charge tuition fees. Parents can choose the school which their children will attend, although their choice may also be partly dependent on the results pupils achieved in basic school. No special preparatory courses are organised for children whose knowledge is insufficient for continued education at publicly-maintained secondary school.

There are comprehensive day secondary schools, evening secondary schools, gymnasiums and public gymnasiums.

All the schools teach up to the 12th grade. The state gymnasiums also have the status of methodological resource centres, which makes them eligible for additional funding from the central government budget. Gymnasiums for which the central government is responsible also provide education for pre-gymnasium grades 7-9. Gymnasiums may also specialise in a specific group of subjects, such as languages, or mathematics. No instruction below grade seven is normally provided at them.

4.1. Organisation of the school

General secondary school premises are generally used for several sets of classes. In these institutions, the length of the school day depends on the number of lessons and not, as a rule, on the capacity of the premises.

Secondary general education may be acquired at evening classes for which there is no age limit.

While the daily timetable is determined by each individual institution, it must be consistent with a maximum total weekly teaching load specified by the Education Act of 34 lessons for grades ten to eleven, and 36 lessons for grade 12.

As at basic school, the two semesters decreed by the Ministry are from 1 September to Christmas, and from the beginning of January until the end of May, with grades normally a function of age.

Although secondary schools adopt the educational methods of basic schools, they also run seminars and project work. Teachers select textbooks appropriate to the courses for which they are responsible. All such course material is approved by the Centre for Educational Curricula and Examinations which publishes a list of recommended titles, and proposes a variety of curricula to teachers enabling them to satisfy official requirements relating to standards in specific subjects.

4.2. Curriculum

All schools have to offer two kinds of course in most subjects, the 'general' course *(vispārējais kurss)* and the 'profile' course *(profilkurss)*, each reflecting the level to which students acquire knowledge. General courses provide basic knowledge in the subject concerned and are shorter in terms of classroom hours (see the sample curriculum on p. 21). Profile courses explore subjects in more depth and require a greater number of classroom hours. Secondary schools offer both compulsory and optional subjects and, in the latter, pupils have to include at least two profile courses.

The class is divided into groups, depending on whether the basic or profile formula is chosen. Schools may also form parallel classes of students at the same grade. For example, city schools usually have 2-5 parallel classes at grade 10, and 2-4 parallel classes at grade 11, but others may have only one class for either of these grades. In secondary schools with several classes, teaching may be organised with respect to certain broad areas of specialisation (such as humanities, sciences, etc.).

Five subjects are compulsory for every student in secondary education. The remainder are chosen by students from the courses available at their school, in accordance with their preferences and the subjects they hope to pursue in higher education. Students are obliged to follow a total of 12 courses in all, taking some from each of the four categories of social sciences, foreign languages, natural/technical sciences and culture. The form of teaching chosen by the teachers themselves combines practical and theoretical lessons.

Sample curriculum and lesson plan for secondary schools

Compulsory courses	General course		Profile course	
	(p)	(h)	(p)	(h)
For students with Latvian as the language of instruction				
1. Latvian language and literature	15	525	21	735
2. Mathematics	12	420	18	630
3. History	6	210	12	420
4. Foreign language (one of the languages taught at basic school)	9	315	15	525
5. Physical training	9	315		
For students with language of instruction other than Latvian				
1. Latvian language and literature	12	420	18	630
2. Minority language and literature	15	525	21	735
3. Mathematics	12	420	18	630
4. First foreign language	9	315	15	525
5. History	6	210	12	420
6. Physical training	9	315		
Types of optional courses to be selected				
Social sciences				
* Philosophy	3	105		
* Geography	3	105	6	210
Basics of business economy	3	105	6	210
Ethics	2	70		
Psychology	2	70		
Logic	2	70		
Politics and rights	2	70		
History of religion	2	70		
Health education	2	70		
Foreign languages				
* Second foreign language	9	315	15	525
Third foreign language	9	315	15	525
Natural and technical sciences				
* Physics	10	350	17	595
* Chemistry	7	245	14	490
* Biology	6	210	12	420
Informatics or applied informatics	2	70	6	210
Astronomy	2	70		
Technical graphics	2	70		
Natural sciences	8	280		
Cultural education courses				
* Music	6	210	15	525
* History of culture	6	210		
* Amateur arts	6	210	15	525
Housekeeping	6	210	10	350
Visual art	6	210	12	420
History of art	2	70		

[p] – the usual total number of lessons a week (weekly workload).
[h] – total number of lessons during the three-year-period.
* Optional subjects that all schools have to offer students for possible selection.

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From the course list offered by the school, students choose courses in such a way that the total number of points making up their workload (p) lies within the range from 90 to 108, or so that the total number of lessons during the three-year period ranges from 3 150 to 3 780.

4.3. Assessment – guidance

Assessment in secondary schools is based on the 10-point scale.

The knowledge, skills and attitudes of students are assessed in the same way as at basic schools (see section 3.3.). Their work is analysed by teachers both to assess their knowledge and, by the same token, evaluate the methodology used to teach the subject and, where appropriate, adapt the approach accordingly.

In the same way as at basic schools, students receive a report at the end of each semester, while results books are used for their final assessment by teachers at the end of each year. Satisfactory results are needed for pupils to progress from one grade to the next, following a decision by the head at the recommendation of the school pedagogical council (the *pedagogiska padome* which is distinct from the school council referred to on p. 6). Results following grade 12 also determine entry to higher education. While there are currently no special classes for unsuccessful students, teachers hold consultation sessions after regular school classes, usually once a week. They provide an opportunity for pupils to obtain advice, ask questions on topics they have not understood, repeat tests in which they obtained unsatisfactory marks or take them for the first time if they have been absent.

On completing secondary school, students normally sit final school-leaving examinations and, if they pass, are awarded the certificate of secondary education. More specifically, examinations are open to all secondary school leavers who have received at least a 4-point rating in the subject concerned, as well as those who have regularly attended the relevant course or who wish to improve their final assessment by taking an examination more than once.

A total of five examinations has to be taken in courses the total workload of which is at least 105 lessons. Two of these examinations are prescribed by the Ministry of Education and Science, one may be determined by the school, and the other two chosen by the student. At least one examination has to be taken in a profile course.

Since the establishment of the Centre of Educational Curricula and Examinations in 1994 the examination system in Latvia has changed.

Formerly, there were two kinds of school examinations – written and oral. The written examination assignments (involving composition in the native language and algebra) were announced on television on the day of the exam.

Teachers marked student papers locally at their schools, with no officially standardised scales or regulations to guide them.

Similarly, although questions for the oral exams were prepared by the Ministry, other tasks and materials were the responsibility of teachers at each school whose examination board evaluated student answers independently.

Consequently, results throughout the country were not comparable and, in order to obtain a broader view of the attainment levels of secondary school leavers, a system of centrally marked examinations was introduced.

The first such examination in English was piloted in 1995 and, in 1997, was held throughout the country. The experience so gained will be used for further similar development in the future.

More recently still, in the Spring of 1998, the Centre of Educational Curricula and Examinations ran centralised examinations in the English, German and French languages and piloted similar examinations in mathematics, the Russian language and Latvian as the state language for Russian schools.

As a result, the Centre is now proceeding with centrally marked examinations for virtually all secondary school subjects.

In addition to the secondary school-leaving certificate required for entry to higher education, additional conditions may be imposed by particular institutions. But the centralised examinations system may merge the secondary school leaving examinations with entrance examinations to individual higher education establishments.

Guidance for secondary school students hoping to enter higher education is provided at 'open days' organised by institutions at this level. But no professional guidance classes or consultation are as yet provided within secondary schools themselves.

4.4. Teachers

Teachers in secondary education are trained in specialised courses in education. For information on their status and in-service teacher training, see the corresponding details in section 3.4. (on teachers in compulsory education).

4.5. Statistics 1998/99

Number of pupils in secondary schools	47 134
Number of pupils in part-time schools	10 767
Number of teachers	5 032
Number of teachers in part-time schools	774
Number of secondary schools	384

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, 1998.

5. Initial vocational education and training

The current system of vocational education in Latvia is based on the pre-1991 network of institutions adapted in accordance with the 1991 Education Act. This network of small establishments in terms of their enrolment is itself fairly large, comprising 128 institutions in all, 36% of them in Riga, and the others in rural districts elsewhere. Most of them are directly run by central government, although the creation of private and local authority vocational education institutions has grown in recent years. Vocational education is geared to some 320 professions and areas of specialisation.

Admission to courses in institutions for professional education is possible for those who have completed either compulsory or secondary education (lasting nine and 12 years respectively).

5.1. Organisation of initial training establishments

The Ministry of Education and Science and the other ministries that supervise these institutions (including the Ministries of Agriculture, Welfare and Culture) approve admission plans, establish term dates, student numbers and general admission requirements. Institutions themselves announce the details regarding these matters, and organise selection procedures which may or may not include entrance examinations. Some areas of specialisation include specific health or minimum age requirements.

There are several types of course providing vocational training.

Basic vocational education *(arodpamatskola)* provides instruction and training geared to simple occupations for those who have not completed basic education by the age of 15.

Courses in secondary vocational education *(arodvidusskola)* vary from two to four years of education and training, each of which includes at least some elements of general secondary education. Only students on a four-year programme complete a full course of secondary education. The institutions that provide it are named *arodģimnāzija* and their graduates are eligible for university studies. There are also post-secondary vocational schools *(arodskola)* for holders of general secondary education certificates, and schools for craftsmen *(amatniecības skolas)*.

Secondary professional education institutions, currently known as 'secondary specialised education institutions' *(vidējās speciālās mācību iestādes)*, provide education and training in business, nursing, art, music and

technical and technological subjects. The curricula developed from basic education entail four to five years of study and include a full course of general secondary education. Education and training based on secondary education lasts two to three years, and the curriculum is mainly concentrated on theoretical knowledge and professional training, in fields such as nursing and pharmacy.

Holders of a diploma of secondary professional education may enter higher education.

The future of institutions for professional secondary education – and particularly their courses for holders of the general secondary school certificate – is currently under discussion. There are already moves to reorganise secondary professional education into professional (non-university) higher education along the lines of the German *Fachhochschulen* or Dutch *Hogescholen* (which would place them at ISCED level 5).

5.2. Curriculum

The curricula of institutions for professional education include general subjects of professional training. Variations in number and balance between the different courses depend on the type and level of institution concerned. All subjects in these programmes are compulsory, and are divided into the following three blocks:

- practical training;
- professional education;
- general subjects.

Teachers mainly give classes in which lectures are combined with practical training. The number of lectures is to be reduced in order to lay greater emphasis on independent or group work.

5.3. Assessment/Guidance

The organisation of centres of practical training and examination is already in hand in order to standardise requirements for the award of qualifications. The knowledge and skills of students are tested against qualification requirements in the five such centres already in operation.

Qualification examinations entail both theoretical knowledge and the testing of practical skills, with the former assessed in a written test. A commission involved in the running of the examinations includes representatives from employers, branch associations, and centres for vocational education.

Institutions of vocational secondary education award either the diploma of basic or secondary vocational education, with a vocational qualification, while institutions of secondary professional education award the corresponding diploma and a professional qualification. The diploma is accompanied by a transcript giving the final marks awarded in all subjects.

5.4. Teachers

Teachers working in vocational education and training institutions are traditionally specialists with the appropriate special secondary or higher education in the field concerned. Most of them do not have a specific diploma qualifying them for teaching as such. In 1997/98, there were 5 430 educational and training staff in vocational education, 5 270 of whom were teachers.

Until now, in Latvia, no higher education institutions have offered specialised training for teachers in vocational education and training, or provided courses for subject specialists wishing to teach in this sector. Various higher education institutions which train teachers offer courses in general education, educational psychology and philosophy, theoretical knowledge in the main subject or subjects and areas of specialisation, and didactics. However in the country as a whole, there is an acute need to draw up a special curriculum for the training of teachers in vocational education, enabling them to address its specific problems successfully. It is hoped this kind of study programme may be developed in cooperation with Denmark's Vocational Education and Training Teacher's College.

5.5. Statistics 1997/98

Total number of vocational schools	74
Number of students in vocational schools	26 241
Total number of pedagogical staff	2 633
Number of craft teachers	1 047
Number of classroom teachers	997
Number of secondary professional schools	46
Number of students in secondary professional schools	19 996
Total number of pedagogical staff	2 797
Number of craft teachers	429
Number of classroom teachers	1834

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, 1998.

6. Higher education

From the legal standpoint, higher education is subject to the three Acts regarding Higher Education Institutions, Academic Activity and Education, respectively.

In 1998, there were 19 state-maintained higher education institutions and 15 private ones in Latvia.

Institutions are accredited in accordance with regulations approved by the Cabinet of Ministers, while their classification is determined by the 1995 Higher Education Institutions Act.

As stipulated in the Act, a quality assessment procedure aimed at state accreditation of all courses is being developed, in recognition of the need for a more uniform system of higher education. Following establishment of the Higher Education Quality Assurance Centre in 1995, quality assessment began in 1996/97, and is planned to cover all courses within five years.

In the last three years, higher education in Latvia has considerably expanded, notwithstanding unfavourable economic circumstances and cutbacks in funding.

Non-university higher education

Professional higher education institutions offer applied courses within professionally-oriented study programmes, and undertake applied academic research. Their aim is to provide opportunities for acquiring extensive, professional, applied academically-based higher education.

The following courses are on offer:

- 1-2 year programmes which follow or run in parallel with studies for a Bachelor's degree;
- professionally-oriented programmes lasting a minimum four years after secondary school, which lead to professional education diplomas.

Other **institutions** provide courses, including doctoral studies, and carry out research in separate branches of science, the national economy and the arts. They may thus establish or incorporate bodies such as research institutes, centres, and observatories within the main branches of learning. The professional courses available at these institutions lead to the award of degrees, and correspond to university-type professional education at International Standard Classification for Education (ISCED) level 6.

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University higher education

Universities, over half of whose academic staff hold doctorates, provide courses and academic research in the main branches of learning, to which the results of research themselves contribute. Like the professionally oriented institutions, universities may incorporate research institutes and similar bodies that carry out research at an internationally recognised level, and participate in the implementation of study programmes, international projects, conferences and other forums.

Based on fundamental and/or applied sciences, academic education can be divided into two stages and, at the end of each, students must present a thesis based on their own research.

6.1. Admission requirements

The basic requirement for admission to higher education is the certificate of secondary education. Other requirements reflect the area of specialisation and nature of the institution concerned, but there is no *numerus clausus*. Of special relevance are the general qualifications and potential professional ability of students. The admission procedure is determined by the institution concerned, and may include one or more entrance examinations, and a professional aptitude test.

Formal regulations relating to admission consist not only those of the Ministry of Education and Science applicable to all higher education institutions in Latvia, but also regulations established by the senate at each of them. The required standard of entrance examinations corresponds to that of individual subjects as taught in secondary education.

6.2. Fees/Financial aid for students

The Government determines the number of students whose higher education is to be financed from the national budget. Other students have to pay tuition fees, in accordance with the decision taken by individual institutions. These fees can be paid by either private individuals or legal entities, depending on the contract that a higher education institution has concluded with the student concerned.

However, since 1997, the most successful full-time students of *Bakalaurs* (Bachelor's), *Maģistrs* (Master's), the *Rezidentûra* (a resident programme for first-level medical university graduates) and professional non-university study programmes have been entitled to student loans. However, a loan is available for no more than the acquisition of one bachelor's degree, and then one master's degree (if taken), or for obtaining a higher professional qualification, over a period of study which does not exceed the normal length of the course concerned. The monthly loan for one student may not exceed 35 LVL (around US$60), and is intended to cover normal cost-of-living expenditure. The financial resources for student loans come from the state budget, as well as from target payments on behalf of the student or the study programme. Repayment of loans has to begin no later than six months after graduation, or three months after the discontinuation of study if the courses are not completed. However, it is cancelled by the State if, following graduation, the recipient becomes an employee at a central or local government institutions, or in a profession approved by the Cabinet of Ministers. Otherwise, the annual rate of interest is 5%. Loans are also obtainable for study abroad.

Tuition fees differ with respect to demand for a given area of specialisation on the labour market, or its prestige in society, and not on the kind of education (university or non-university) obtained.

6.3. Academic year

The academic year lasts 10 months, although its organisation depends on each individual institution, so that the actual dates vary from one institution to the next.

6.4. Courses

Higher education institutions can offer academic and/or professional higher education courses. Of the two kinds of professional higher education in Latvia, the first leads to an academic degree (university-type education corresponding to ISCED level 6) giving direct access to Master's and doctoral studies, while the

second does not, focusing mainly instead on the acquisition of professional skills (non-university education, ISCED level 5). Courses may be organised on a full-time, or part-time basis, or rely on distance education for their delivery. The main teaching methods used are lectures, seminars, research working groups, case studies, discussions, and individual work by students.

6.5. Assessment/Qualifications

Students are assessed by means of a 10-point system. Their knowledge is examined in tests, termly papers, final tests, state examinations, and graduation papers.

The academic degree of *Bakalaurs* is conferred on successful completion of a first stage. *Bakalaurs* programmes prepare students for a one- or two-year professional training programme, or further academic education. In some cases (such as that of teacher education), professional training may take place concurrently with *Bakalaurs* studies, and last five years.

The academic degree of *Maģistrs* (Master's) is conferred after the second stage of academic education which takes one-and-a-half to two years. A *Bakalaurs* degree is a prerequisite for admission to a *Maģistrs* course. Graduates from three-year *Bakalaurs* courses can either enrol for *Maģistrs* courses at the same institution, or they may continue their studies at institutions with longer *Bakalaurs*. In either case, they may have to satisfy additional requirements (such as obtaining extra credits, or passing further examinations).

A *Maģistrs* degree (or the equivalent) is required for admission to doctoral studies which lead to two possible degrees, namely the *zinātņu doktors* (comparable to a Ph.D.), and a higher degree still, the Dr.hab. A *zinātņu doktors* degree may be conferred after public defence of a doctoral thesis following three to four years of full-time university study, or an equivalent amount of independent research carried out during work at university, a research institution or hospital, or in industry etc. The Dr.hab. degree is awarded after defence of a habilitation thesis, which is usually a summary of several major scientific and/or educational publications, or a monograph written following defence of the first doctoral dissertation.

The professional qualifications awarded in **higher professional education** include those of agronomist, physician, pharmacist, engineer, performing artist, artist, social worker, teacher, dentist, technologist and veterinary surgeon.

6.6. Teachers

According to the 1995 Higher Education Act, only persons with a university degree, or a degree obtained in non-university higher education, may teach or lecture in higher education institutions.

Their teaching staff are appointed by open competition for a 6-year period. However, when a staff vacancy or temporary vacancy occurs, the senate of the institution concerned may, instead of inviting competitive applications, employ a visiting professor, assistant professor or lecturer.

Academics appointed to professorships must hold a doctoral degree, in addition to satisfying the specific requirements of a given institution. Most professors have acquired an international professional reputation.

Appointments to associated professorships and the position of Docent call for a doctoral degree and teaching experience.

Lectors and Assistants need to hold at least a Master's degree.

Requirements regarding teaching qualifications differ between university- and non-university-type higher education, as teachers in the latter may have no degree. They must, however, have professional experience and a significant track record in the field. For example, in fields of specialisation in the arts, professors must be able to point to the results of creative work, in accordance with the regulations on academic positions adopted by the senate of the higher education concerned.

Teachers may be full-time, part-time, temporary or permanent, but all teachers are obliged to re-train and undergo in-service training.

6.7. Statistics

1998/99

Number of institutions	33
Number of students	76 620
Number of teachers	3 911

Number of students within higher education, 1997/98

	Level 1 – basic studies *Pamatstudijas*	Master degree studies *Maģistratūra*	Doctoral studies *Doktorantūra*	Total
Universities	11 023	3 645	278	14 946 (73%)
%	74	24	2	100
University-type	2 063	340	23	2 426 (12%)
%	85	14	1	100
Other	2 824	168	0	3 010 (15%)
%	94	6	0	100
Total	15 928	4 153	301	20 382

Source: Ministry of Education and Science.

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Lithuania

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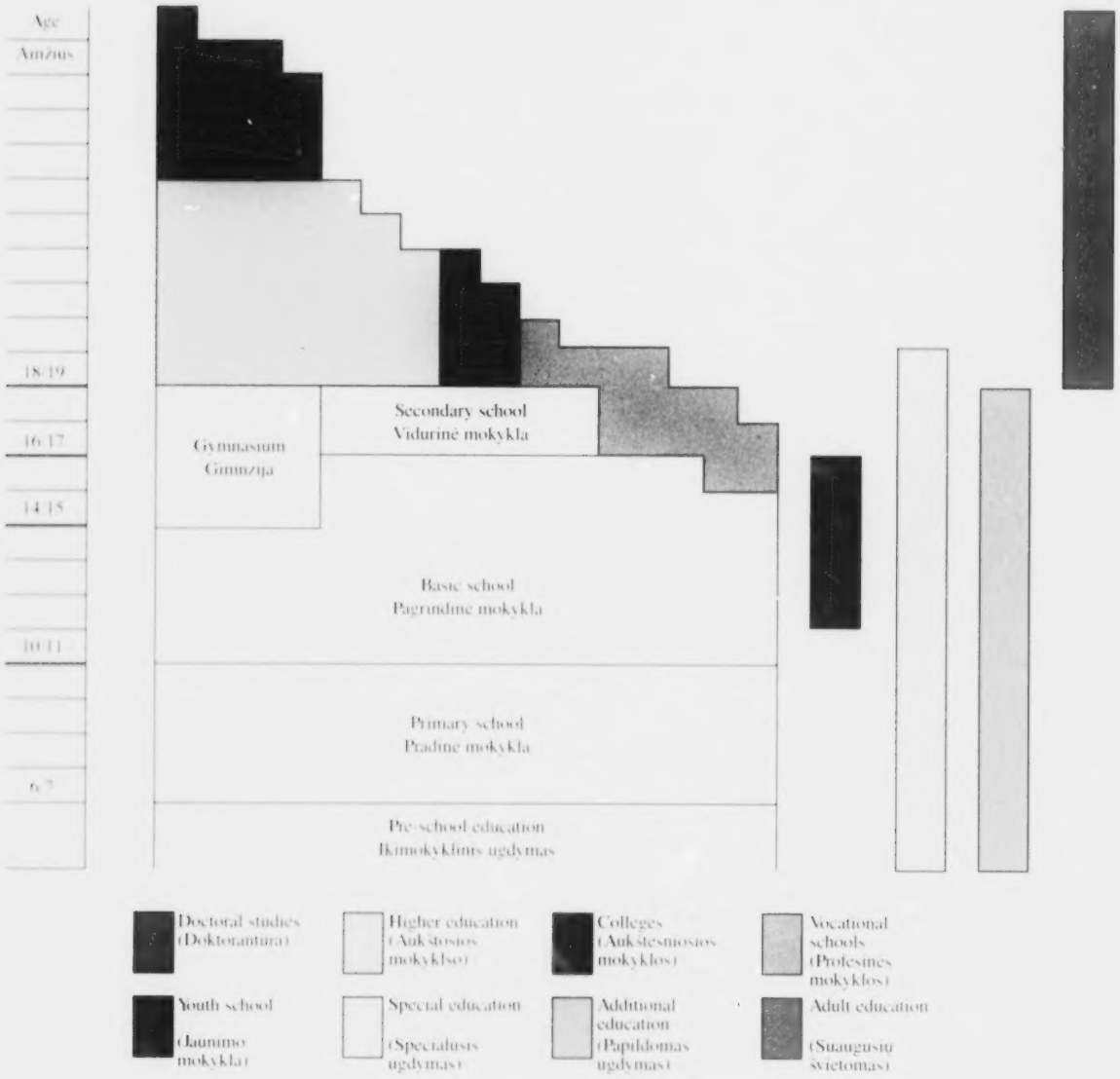
Lithuanian education system (1998/99)



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Lithuania

1. Responsibilities and administration

1.1. Background

With an area of 65 300 km^2, Lithuania is a part of the economic region known as the Baltic Republics, which is situated along the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea. Autonomous since 1918, the Lithuanian State came under Soviet occupation in 1940. Although its independence was proclaimed on 11 March 1990, it was more than a year before the State achieved international recognition.

In 1998, the population of Lithuania was 3.704 million with a density of 56.7 inhabitants per square kilometre. The largest city is the capital, Vilnius, with a population of 578 400. Lithuania's ethnic composition is relatively homogeneous with more than 81.6 % Lithuanians, 8.2 % Russians and 7% Poles. The remaining 3.3% are Belorussians (1.5%), Ukrainians (1.0%), Jews (0.1%), Tartars (0.1%) and other nationalities (0.6%).

Before the Second World War, Lithuania was predominantly an agricultural country. This situation is slowly changing, with industry assuming a more prominent role. The main industrial sectors include electrical engineering (with one of the largest nuclear power plants in Europe), petroleum, machinery, chemicals, forestry, paper and pulp manufacturing, and food production.

In 1997, about 21.7 % of the working population was engaged in agriculture, 17.3 % in manufacturing industry, and 16.2 % in trade and services. In December 1997, officially registered unemployment was 6.7%. Lithuania is a parliamentary republic governed by a democratically elected parliament, the *Seimas*. The Government is headed by a Prime Minister. Government jurisdiction is divided between central and municipal governments. Municipal government has undergone significant reform with the creation of regional governments for ten counties, under whose jurisdiction have been placed a total of 56 municipalities.

The official language is Lithuanian, but many Lithuanians speak one or more foreign languages, most commonly Russian and one western European language. At the outset, education in Lithuania was closely linked to the spread of Christianity. During the periods of Russian sovereignty (1865-1905 and 1940-1991) the education system was restructured along the lines of the Russian and the Soviet education systems, respectively. In 1988, with the emergence of the Lithuanian Reform Union, *Sajūdis*, Lithuanian teachers and educators publicly announced their desire to develop an education system different from that of the Soviet Union, with the concept of a *tautinė mokykla* (national school). Thus, 1988 marks the beginning of the most recent period of Lithuanian educational reform.

In the 1997/98 school year, for every 10 000 inhabitants there were 1 935 students in all educational institutions, 1 527 students at schools for general education, 146 students at vocational schools, 81 in vocational colleges, and 181 in higher education (university-level) institutions.

Overall, there are 20 denominations registered in Lithuania. Nine of them are regarded as traditional religious communities, namely the Roman Catholics, the Church of Old Rite, the Orthodox Church, Evangelical Lutherans, Evangelical Reformists, Greek Catholics, Moslems, Judaists, and Karaites.

Roman Catholics constitute the largest denomination, comprising some 90% of the country's religious population. The majority of the former are of Lithuanian and Polish nationality, though they include some Belorussians. Old Rite believers are normally of Russian nationality, and Eastern Orthodox worshippers of Russian, Belorussian or Ukrainian nationality. Whereas the majority of Evangelical Reformists live in northern Lithuania, Evangelical Lutherans generally live in the south-east.

National minorities are able to teach their children their mother tongue and national history, and to foster their culture. In 1997/98, a language of instruction other than Lithuanian was used at 232 schools of general

education in 10 towns and 23 municipal districts. These schools taught 69 777 pupils (12.8% of all pupils). In 1996, 28 textbooks were published in Polish, and 16 in Russian. Schools with national minorities follow the common core curriculum for general education approved by the Ministry of Education and Science, and may supplement it with ethno-cultural elements.

1.2. Basic principles of the education system

After the restoration of statehood, new educational legislation became a priority for the *Seimas*. The new 1991 law on education provided for substantial changes in its aims, content, and structure. The aims meant that individuals should acquire knowledge and understanding of the principles of a democratic, pluralistic society, accept humanism and tolerance as basic values, develop independent decision-making skills and acquire professional expertise. They also implied substantial changes in teaching methods, the preparation of new textbooks, and reformed structures for more flexible secondary education. In 1992, the Government published a document entitled The *General Concept of Education in Lithuania*, stating that 'the educational system is based on European cultural values: the absolute value of the individual, neighbourly love, innate equality among men, freedom of conscience, tolerance, the affirmation of democratic social relations'. The main principles of Lithuanian education expressed in this document are humanism, democracy, renewal, and commitment to Lithuanian culture together with the preservation of its identity and historic continuity.

The General Concept of Education in Lithuania sets out fundamental guidelines for the reform of the education system. Following its approval by the Government and *Seimas*, it was the basis for a new law in 1991, and has inspired the implementation of reform since then. In 1992 the document was released to the public.

1.3. Distribution of responsibilities

Education is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Science. However, each of the ten counties has a department of education to which certain ministerial duties are delegated. The main task of these county departments is organising school inspection. Indeed, responsibility for education is, to some extent, shared between central government, the counties and municipalities, as well as the governing bodies of educational institutions.

Enacted by the *Seimas*, legislation may be initiated by its members, the President of the Republic, the Government and, also, any group of 50 000 citizens normally entitled to vote, who may submit legislative proposals to the *Seimas*. In addition, laws may be passed by referendum. The long and complex procedure for consideration and enactment of draft legislation is regulated by statute.

According to the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, a referendum may be the instrument for resolving the most important issues regarding the State and life of the nation, as well as enacting basic legislative provisions. A referendum is called by the *Seimas*, and may strengthen the legitimacy of proposed legislation.

Responsibility for implementing legislation lies with the Government and institutions of public administration.

Statutory education reform began with the March 1990 Act of Independence. At present, education is regulated by the Laws on Education, Science and Studies, Vocational Education and Training, and subsequent legislation. The activity of regional and local educational establishments is governed by the Laws on the Governing of the County and on Local Self-government.

Educational institutions directly responsible to **the central authorities** (essentially vocational schools and colleges) are established, reorganised or closed by the Ministry of Education and Science, or other ministries or government bodies.

Schools under **the county authorities** (boarding schools and schools for special education) are similarly maintained by the county governor.

Schools under **local authorities** (pre-schools and schools of general education) are administered by the local government councils, following the approval of the Ministry of Education and Science and the county governor.

Authorities able to set up and maintain institutions as described above are known as their founding bodies or 'founders'. The institutions themselves are legal entities registered in compliance with government regulations. With the exception of higher education institutions which enjoy considerable autonomy, they are responsible to

their founding bodies. They have rights and duties stipulated in the regulations governing their activity or, in the case of higher education institutions, in their statutes.

1.4. Administration

Education is administered by the Government and ends with examinations and the award of government-recognised diplomas or certificates. Education-related laws, government resolutions and orders of the Minister of Education and Science are legal acts that regulate standards for general education, professions and fields of specialisation, and stipulate general requirements for curricula, including their constituent modules and qualification requirements. The documents drawn up pursuant to the legal acts are then classified into a number of national education-related registers, each concerned with different issues, such as the National Register of Education, Science and Study Institutions, the National Register of Study and Training Programmes, the National Register of Licences and the Register of Education Certificates.

Except in the case of higher education, educational institutions work in accordance with teaching plans, the common core curriculum and study programmes directly or indirectly approved by the Ministry of Education and Science. Responsibility for curricular implementation lies with the deputy school head, while extra-curricular activities and those of optional subjects are drawn up by teachers and approved by the head of the school. Institutions are the joint responsibility of their heads, or directors, and the founders who appoint and dismiss them. The task of pupil or student assessment lies with teachers themselves who can exercise considerable discretion in their use of teaching methods, textbooks and other materials. Pupils and students who have satisfactorily completed whole courses – or recognised parts of courses – at public or non-state educational institutions receive an official certificate testifying to their attainment, in compliance with Ministry of Education and Science norms.

The **general secondary school system** is administered at two levels, namely the education departments of local government councils, and the county authorities on behalf of the Ministry of Education and Science. The departments have to prepare and implement regional education programmes, and create optimal conditions for institutions. The foregoing programmes are usually part of regional development programmes, but may also be specific thematic programmes, as in south-east Lithuania where a programme to promote the Lithuanian language has been launched for the population of predominantly Russian and Polish nationality.

Although founders have general responsibility for the financial resources of their schools, individual institutions may have some scope for self-management in this area. While, therefore, basic salary levels are set by the Government, school heads may award bonuses to staff members in accordance with government norms, provided the money is available.

Vocational education and training institutions comprising vocational schools and colleges are the responsibility of several ministries, including the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Social Security and Labour.

In the counties, representatives from all county vocational schools and colleges, the county administrative authorities, and the social partners (including trade unions, regional chambers of trade and commerce, and firms), take part in the activities of vocational education and training boards. One of the tasks of the boards is to analyse the demand for different forms of specialist training in their regions. Financial management of vocational institutions is undertaken by their heads under the supervision of the founders.

Institutions of higher education are placed under the authority of the Research and Higher Education Department at the Ministry of Education and Science. However, important issues, such as organisation and funding, are the responsibility of the Government's advisory body on research and higher education, the Science Council of Lithuania. And, as already pointed out, the State grants universities considerable autonomy.

University-level institutions register their statutes at the *Seimas*. The Government may regulate activities in higher education institutions through subsidies, the allocation of state-financed student places, and by other means. Institutions prepare and update their study programmes and apply for registration to the Research and Higher Education Department.

The supreme authority of an institution is its *Senate* (Council) which elects the chief administrator, the *Rector*. The Rectors' Conference is a joint meeting of rectors to discuss draft legislation prepared by the Research and Higher Education Department, as well as more general issues, and to take decisions regarding the registration of new higher education institutions.

All teaching staff are elected at the *Faculty Councils* (the main decision-making bodies in the faculties). Requirements for university degrees are approved by the Government on recommendations from the Science Council of Lithuania, while rules for student admission are drawn up by institutions on the basis of government criteria.

1.5. Inspection and supervision of teaching

Inspection and supervision of teaching activity are not carried out by a formally independent legal entity. Instead, they are co-ordinated by the Ministry of Education and Science at different administrative levels – central, county or local – depending on the kind of educational institution concerned. It is worth noting that, although schools responsible to local government are inspected by the local body established for that purpose, they may also be inspected at the level of the county under whose jurisdiction the same local authority falls. Furthermore, the county inspectorates (as well as the central authorities) also have a right to inspect centrally-maintained schools within their geographical administrative area.

Inspection and supervision are carried out in accordance with the ***Supervision Plan of the Implementation of the General Policy of Education*** drawn up by the Ministry. The main objectives and tasks of the *Plan* are as follows:

- to ensure that the activities of the state inspectorates of the county governor administrations are consistent with those pursued by the Ministry;
- to collect, analyse and circulate information concerning the development of educational reform, with conclusions and proposals for the directors of institutions, county education departments and the Ministry of Education and Science;
- to explain national education policy, and provide information and guidance to institutions in implementing it.

Supervision of implementation occurs as follows:

- On the basis of the **Plan**, the Ministry of Education and Science requires county administrative authorities to supervise the area within their jurisdiction (comprising several municipalities).
- When supervision by county and local administrations has been completed, the former submit their findings to the Ministry by way of feedback.
- These results are analysed by the Ministry, and may provide the basis for new regulations.

1.6. Financing

The main sources of financing for **public educational establishments** are the state and local administration budgets. The *Seimas* earmarks budgetary allocations to the Ministry of Education and Science, county administrative authorities, and the municipalities, in addition to the revenue the latter receive from local taxes. Within the resources available, local administrative authorities establish a budget for education within the municipality concerned.

Pre-schools and schools of general education are financed from this budget on a scale that varies from one municipality to the next. The budget itself is managed by the founder (the local authority) which controls the financial activity of the schools together with departments subordinate to the State Control – the supreme state institution for economic and financial control, responsible to the *Seimas*. However, school salary levels are established by the central Government.

Vocational schools and colleges are financed from the state (government) budget, with the budget of each individual institution administered by its head who is responsible to the central authorities, the latter again sharing control of the financial activity of schools with the appropriate departments of the State Control.

Higher education institutions, though financed from the state budget, enjoy considerable autonomy in relation to their courses and activity, and their resources are managed in accordance with their statutes.

Pupils and students at **schools of general education**, or **vocational schools and colleges**, do not pay for tuition. However, under a January 1996 government resolution, higher education institutions may establish places for students who pay tuition fees, alongside the limited quota of state-funded places. Such fees constitute extra income for these institutions, in addition to their public budgetary allocation. Thus, in 1997, over and above 56 800 state-maintained students, a further 10 300 students paid fees. Indeed, a further government resolution of July 1998 enabled fees to be paid by as many as half of those enrolling in each study programme. In 1998, the state-funded quota was fixed at 17 205 students out of a total 73 210 applicants, 5 712 of whom were, however, willing to pay for their tuition.

In schools for general education, certain items, such as textbooks and teaching materials are provided for pupils by the State, but others they have to buy themselves, including exercise books, dictionaries and atlases. Students at vocational schools and colleges can obtain textbooks from their school libraries, although they normally work with materials prepared by the teachers themselves.

Students in higher education institutions are responsible for securing their own teaching materials.

Orphans or pupils from families receiving social assistance benefit from free school meals.

1.7. Consultation

Although there are no consultative centres as such, three-day seminars called 'Ministerial Days in the Counties' are organised. The seminars are essentially visits by officials from the Ministry of Education and Science to county and local authorities, to discuss and provide them with information on matters such as the implementation of laws relating to education, the development and implementation of programmes, optimisation of the educational network, and the assessment of heads of institutions and teachers.

1.8. Private schools

Non-state educational institutions may be established, reorganised and closed by private persons or recognised legal entities, with the approval of the Ministry of Education and Science. However, there are only 56 such institutions, compared to 2 912 public ones.

Non-state educational institutions are maintained by their founders. They may offer education whose standard is formally approved by the State, along with their certificates, curricula and teaching activity.

Alternatively, they may offer a variety of courses in areas such as cookery, handicraft and foreign languages, whose content and standards are not subject to formal state approval, although the centres themselves operate in accordance with ministerial regulations.

Graduates of non-state institutions are awarded a certificate recognised by the Ministry provided their education is of the state-approved standard.

To finance curricula to this standard, institutions receive (state or municipal) budgetary funds in the same way as public institutions under central and municipal government, and on a similar scale in line with the estimated expenditure per pupil in the public sector.

Tuition fees at non-state educational institutions are paid subject to agreement between those who pay (usually parents) and the school.

2. Pre-school education

Pre-school education forms the foundation for subsequent education and future personal activity. It is part of general education placed under the Minister of Education and Science which determines its curriculum and aims.

Pre-school education answers three central needs of children, namely security, activity and self-expression. Its task is to boost their self-reliance, initiative and creativity, and look after their health. Above all, it is meant to help families take care of and educate their children skilfully. Attendance at day nurseries and kindergartens is not compulsory. But it is recommended that, from the age of four or five, children attend the kindergarten to start to mix with adults and other children outside the family, and prepare for subsequent schooling. Pre-school institutions are becoming more varied with, at present, state and non-state schools, kindergartens run by religious communities, Montessori establishments and full- and part-time kindergartens. Day nurseries are for children aged up to three, kindergartens for those aged up to six or seven, and primary-school-type kindergartens for children who may be as old as ten.

Although pre-schools may offer different methods, programmes or extra-curricular activities, they do not generally determine the kind of subsequent education children receive (except in the case of those sent to special schools).

All kindergartens are administered in the same basic way. However, administration of a primary-school-type kindergarten depends on the location of its premises. On kindergarten premises, it is managed by its own head, although a deputy head for primary education may be appointed. On the premises of a school for general education, it is managed by the administration of that school.

2.1. School organisation

Children in pre-school institutions are grouped according to age, or in mixed age-groups. The maximum number of children together when they are aged between one-and-a-half and three, is 10. When the age-range is 3-7, the limit is 15. The minimum number of children in the institution is determined by its founder.

Although the school year begins on 1 September, provision in pre-school institutions is very loosely structured with no formally defined school days, terms or even lessons. Conditions encourage the communicative, artistic and cognitive potential of children, in both play and work. During these activities, educational, developmental and training considerations are all naturally taken into account. Schools are open throughout the year except on national holidays and at weekends.

An August 1995 Government Resolution set the terms now regulating payment for children who attend state pre-school institutions. Parents normally have to make a 60% contribution to the cost of their children's sustenance (though there are exemptions, or a 50% reduction to take account of limited means in cases where, for example, only one parent is bringing up a child, the father is doing military service, or there are three or more children in the family).

The State will also provide support in the form of compensatory payments when children of pre-school age are brought up at home. Additional support for children in pre-school institutions may be funded from municipal budgets, as well as from the resources of institutions themselves, enterprises or other organisations. These resources are distributed to the schools.

2.2. Curriculum and assessment

The basic aim of pre-school education is to assist in the development of a child's personality and impart the fundamental skills needed for life in society.

For this purpose, it follows two state programmes, ***The Guidelines of Pre-school Education – a Curriculum for Teachers and Parents*** (1993) and the 1993 kindergarten programme *Vėrinėlis* (*The String*). While both pursue the same goals, their methods differ. *The Guidelines of Pre-school Education* uses integrated education, whereas *The String* is based on a creative method inspired by the principles of holistic education. Instead of a curriculum divided into separate subjects, various activities conducive to a child's development are integrated, including language, general awareness, art, music, games, crafts and acting [1].

Certain pre-school groups are based on the principles of M.Montessori and R.Steiner. Institutions may also provide additional artistic, linguistic and musical education, at the request of parents.

Only special education pre-schools or specialised institutions at pre-school level (for example, in art) prepare for specific kinds of primary education that are different from the mainstream. In other cases, children may be admitted to any kind of primary school irrespective of their pre-school institution.

Although pre-school children are not subject to regular assessment, primary schools admit children aged 6 or 7 who conform to *The School Maturity Criteria* established by an expert commission and approved by the Minister of Education and Science in 1996. According to the criteria, child maturity includes socio-emotional maturity (exemplified by self-awareness, self-esteem and elementary self-control, ability to mix and co-operate and a sense of responsibility), intellectual maturity (including general awareness and sensitivity, good memory skills, signs of logical reasoning, imagination and creativity), and a natural disposition towards schooling (including willingness to attend school and an interest in reading, writing and elementary mathematics).

1 The preface to the programme states that 'The String' is to be understood as a kind of relic, or keepsake handed down from generation to generation. Just as pearls are assembled into a necklace on a single thread, so children 'string' their experience, word by word, thought by thought into their own pattern of creative development for the benefit of posterity.

On the basis of observation rather than formal tests, kindergarten advisers or parents (if a child has not attended pre-school) normally decide whether children should attend primary school. However, psychological testing may be used in exceptional cases. Parents may also decide which primary school their children should attend and at what age. If they want them to be taught in a language other than Lithuanian, they have to choose an appropriate school for that purpose. In regions with a sizeable linguistic minority, this is not usually a problem, although the real needs of the area concerned are taken into consideration.

Pre-school education has been supported by two international projects, namely ***The Democratisation of the Pre-school Education System*** launched by the Open Society Fund-Lithuania and Egmont Peterson (Denmark) in 1992, and *Step by Step*, another Open Society Fund project started in 1994. The first involves 32 pre-school establishments and primary-school-type kindergartens, and the second 22 institutions. Provision in all of them follows ***The Guidelines of Pre-school Education***, with emphasis on the principles of a humanistic education, and use of a distinctive methodology. Both projects have brought about favourable changes in teacher training institutions and resulted in the publication of books on teaching methods.

2.3. Teacher training

Pre-school teachers may be trained at either university-level higher education institutions or teacher training colleges (whose provision corresponds to level 5 of the International Standard Classification for Education). In fact, whereas the former train for any level of education, colleges prepare teachers for pre-school, primary or lower secondary work only. College courses may last three years or four (if an additional specialisation is involved), whereas those in higher education institutions entail courses for a Bachelor's degree lasting four years or five years (if more than one subject of specialisation is studied), with a further one-and-a-half to two years for a Master's qualification.

In the case of pre-school training, teachers are trained for all aspects of their future activity but without reference to specialised subjects. College courses for pre-school teachers last just three years. Some pre-school institutions employ specialists to teach music, dance and foreign languages, and also make their facilities available for teaching practice.

2.4. Statistics

At the end of 1997, there were 724 pre-school establishments (491 in urban areas, and 233 in rural areas) attended by 96 443 children (86 369 in urban areas and 10 074 in rural ones). These schools employed 12 190 teaching staff (10 900 in urban areas and 1 290 in rural areas), including school heads, music teachers, special teachers, psychologists and other staff, in addition to the 9 676 group and senior teachers in regular daily contact with children. On the basis of this latter figure, the national pupil/teacher ratio was 10, while the average number of children in a group was 18.7.

3. Compulsory education/Training

Article 19 of the Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania stipulates that education is compulsory for all pupils up to the age of 16 (inclusive). Article 4 of the Law (as revised), which came into force on 29 July 1998, stipulates that basic (lower secondary) school should last six years (replacing the former five-year basic school). Thus, compulsory education now involves four years of primary education followed by six years of basic (lower secondary) education (ten years in all). Compulsory education is provided not only in publicly-maintained schools of general education, but in private schools that get state support if they adopt the state curriculum. However, enrolment in the latter is still limited.

3.1. Primary education

Schooling in Lithuania has inherited a Soviet, and even partly tsarist Russian, structure. As a result, primary schools are often not separated from basic or secondary schools, and even some gymnasiums operate both primary and basic school classes.

Primary schools constitute the first level of schooling from first to fourth forms, and initially admit children aged between six and seven. Primary education is part of the statutory period of education, and is free.

The general aim of schools is to prepare for the development of an educated, independent and active personality. It seeks to do so by the following means:

- creating conditions conducive to the growth of each child's individuality;
- imparting the basics of culture (intellectual, aesthetic, ethical);
- imparting knowledge and fostering the ability to analyse and interpret it;
- developing all ways of acquiring it that are relevant to a person's life, and his or her relations with society at large.

The primary level may be classified as follows:

- Primary-school-type kindergartens incorporating forms 1 to 4, each sometimes comprising several classes in the same year;
- sets of primary-level forms 1 to 4 in general secondary schools and basic schools;
- primary schools;
- small-set primary schools (set up in rural areas).

All primary schools follow a common state-approved core curriculum and plan for teaching. However, primary education at fine arts gymnasiums and special schools is normally followed by the same kind of training in the school concerned. Schools are not classified according to their size.

3.1.1. School organisation

Primary schools are coeducational and, in villages, have small sets of up to 25 children grouped into classes which each combine different ages and school years. Elsewhere, schools can be attended by 50 to 500 children depending on the size of their premises. The maximum number of pupils in a single class is 24.

Primary schools operate on the basis of either one set of pupils each day or, where there are many pupils, two sets (shifts). Classes are based on the age of pupils. The primary school year comprising three terms is a minimum 170 days of school attendance. Pupils in forms 1-4 attend school five days a week throughout the year which finishes no earlier than 31 May.

In the first year, the number of lessons a week is 22, in the second to fourth years, 23. The daily teaching workload is four or five lessons. Lessons may also be given outside the formal curriculum.

Pupils receive free textbooks, but have to buy their exercise books. Teachers are provided with teaching manuals. A variety of contrasting textbooks on music have already been published, and alternative sources similarly prepared for ethics and mathematics are being made available in 1999 and 2000. Prior to each school year, the Ministry of Education and Science presents schools with sets of recommended textbooks from which teachers are free to select those they prefer.

3.1.2. Curriculum

Provision of primary education follows the 1992 *General Curriculum Framework for Primary School* approved by the Ministry of Education and Science. The curriculum of compulsory subjects includes moral education (parents may choose whether their children receive religious instruction relevant to a given denomination, or lessons in ethics), the Lithuanian language, perception and understanding of the world, mathematics, fine arts and crafts, music, physical training and one foreign language (English, German or French).

Educational provision is based on the selection by each school of one of four teaching plans proposed by the Ministry. The *Curriculum Framework* does not prescribe the weekly number of lessons (periods) per subject, but this is listed in the plans. In the first year of primary education, lessons last 35 minutes. In the second to fourth forms, they may last 35, 40 or 45 minutes, depending on the teaching plan chosen.

In addition to the foregoing compulsory subjects, certain others are optional. Both categories are allocated a given number of lessons by the Ministry, whose precise schedule is at the discretion of the school where, in several subjects, teachers themselves have some say in establishing the schedule. Furthermore, in three subjects, namely fine arts, music and a foreign language, the plans allow for so-called intensive provision from the

second form onwards. Instruction in the first two (fine arts and music) has to be given at this stage, irrespective of whether the teaching is intensive or not. However, at the same stage, the foreign language has to be taught intensively, or not at all. Intensive instruction of this kind in any of the three subjects can only be provided in accordance with a programme *(individualioji programa)* either recommended by the Ministry or, in most cases, approved by it following the submission of a proposal from the school concerned.

Pupils following the general curriculum are normally taught to the same level. Pupils who are integrated into mainstream education, but have special educational needs, are offered specifically adapted programmes, subject to professional recommendations from educational psychologists. Adapted programmes are drawn up by the class teacher, approved by the school group on methodology, and confirmed by the school head. Programmes for special schools are approved and confirmed by the Ministry of Education and Science. Teachers are free to choose their teaching methods. Indeed, the former teacher-centred, approach is being superseded by a new, pupil-centred ethos with an emphasis on humanistic cooperative pedagogy, active teaching and group work.

3.1.3. Assessment

Although primary school pupils do not take any examinations, their progress is assessed on a continuous basis, and reported to their parents. If marks are used, a 10-point system is employed, with a final mark at the end of every term and school year. A total of one to three marks is felt to be unsatisfactory, and the pupils concerned are considered not to have passed, or to be 'non-certified'. However, primary school councils may decide that marks should not be used for pupil assessment.

Responsibility for assessment lies with the teacher, so pupils move on to a higher class following a decision by the teachers' council of their school. Only pupils with a satisfactory end-of-year assessment in their subjects can continue into the next class. If the performance of pupils in some subjects is unsatisfactory, or if they are 'non-certified', they may ask for additional assignments whose duration is determined by the teachers' council. But pupils whose attainment in certain subjects is sub-standard may sometimes move on to the following class at their parents' request. By contrast, exceptional pupils with perhaps 9-point or 10-point end-of-term scores in all subjects may be allowed to skip one class after their knowledge of subjects taught in that class has been tested.

Pupils with learning difficulties at special schools, or in mainstream schools for general education, may be denied entry to the next class only if this is recommended by their parents or a special school commission.

Progress from primary to secondary school normally occurs as a matter of course on the basis of the 4th-form end of-year assessment.

In the primary school leaving certificate, the teachers' council states whether the pupil holding the qualification will enter lower secondary school. Where marks are not referred to in the certificate, attainment may be recorded using percentages, written summaries, symbols or other comparable indicators.

3.1.4. Teachers

As already mentioned under 2.3 (above), primary teachers are trained to teach all necessary subjects at university-level institutions or teacher training colleges.

3.1.5. Statistics

In the 1997/98 school year, there were 149 primary-school-type kindergartens, and 834 primary schools. Their 226 744 pupils accounted for 98.7% of pupils in the seven-to-ten-year-old age-group. They were taught by 13 417 teachers, giving a 16.9 pupil/teacher ratio.

3.2. Lower secondary education

On completion of primary education (forms 1 to 4), pupils move on to **basic school** *(pagrindinė mokykla)* for their lower secondary education corresponding to forms 5 to 9 (soon to be 10 as discussed at the beginning of section 3). Basic schools thus normally cover the 10-16 age-group. They may be autonomous, operate in conjunction with a primary school, or be part of a secondary school catering for both upper and lower levels.

When pupils complete this level of education, they are awarded a basic school-leaving certificate. School-leaving examinations are governed by Ministry of Education and Science criteria, and may be noted in the certificate. However, after four years, when aged 14 or 15, pupils may choose to enter a gymnasium (see Section 4). Pupils aged 14 who want to get a vocational qualification and find employment may also leave the *pagrindinė mokykla* and go to **vocational schools** to complete their basic school course.

On completion of basic school, pupils may enter upper secondary education, a vocational school or some colleges (such as conservatoires), or go to work (provided they are aged 16).

Pupils unsuited to mainstream general education (generally because they lack motivation) may, at the age of 12, after just one year of basic school, go to **youth schools**. These separate institutions offer pupils an opportunity to acquire lower secondary education over a 10-year period or more, but also, if appropriate, to re-enter the mainstream.

Pupils from families officially in need of social welfare support can finish their compulsory education in **boarding schools**.

Pupils with special needs are educated and trained in various **schools of special education** depending on their impairment and specific requirements. Their provision approved by the Ministry of Education and Science includes general teaching programmes, as well as special courses that may be adapted to the needs of individual pupils. Pupils receive certificates when they complete special education, or at the end of its separate stages (modules). After completion of their schooling, pupils with special needs may also enter vocational schools.

The aim of all types of general education is to cater for the needs of pupils of different ages, abilities and aptitudes, while creating favourable conditions for the education of young people whose motivation also differs.

As a rule, compulsory education ends with completion of basic schooling at the age of 16.

3.2.1. Organisation of the school

In all public-sector schools of general education, education is free. Private schools charge their own fees.

Although most general education schools are coeducational, certain special institutions in this category are single-sex schools.

While schools may cater for as many as 2 500 pupils, the establishment of a school is authorised when there are no more than three. Small schools are common in eastern Lithuania where the population consists of several nationalities, as well as in rural areas, whereas large ones operate in the big cities. The vast majority of all institutions aim to cater for one daily set, or shift, of pupils, but 9.5% have a daily two-shift intake. This applies to as many as 60% of schools in Vilnius, and 28% in the second largest city, Kaunas.

Where this occurs, pupils in forms 5 and 9 (the first and last years of basic school) are taught during the first shift, and those in forms 6 to 8 during the second, which normally ends no later than 7 p.m. Every effort is made to ensure that regular schooling is offered during the day, whereas extra-curricular activity generally occurs in the evening.

Rather than depending on the availability of school premises, the hours of the school day are arranged by each institution with due regard for a general regulation established by the Ministry of Education and Science.

The school councils decide whether teaching will be spread over a five-day or six-day week, or both. The three-term school year for forms 6 to 9 lasts 195 school days. While schools may choose to organise their work over two halves of the year, the semester system is not commonly adopted until upper secondary level.

Textbooks and teaching materials are approved by ministerial expert commissions. Authors are urged to write integrated books comprising textbooks, exercises and a teacher's manual. Where more than one form of teaching support is available, teachers may choose between them. Use is also made of support in forms such as computer software, works of fiction and the mass media.

3.2.2. Curriculum

Pending transition to the six-year basic school, use is being made of the teaching plans for the five-year system. The plans set out both the compulsory (core) subjects and optional subjects, as well as the number of lessons per subject a week. At basic school level (forms 5 to 9), the total number of lessons is 27 to 31. The 16 compulsory subjects are moral education (religion or ethics), the Lithuanian language, two foreign languages, mathematics, nature and man, biology, physics, chemistry, history, civics, geography, art, music, crafts and physical training. These subjects are studied by all pupils, but may be allocated a variable number of lessons, depending on the level chosen by each.

In basic schools, instruction is normally offered at either level B *(basic)* or level S (that of intensified provision). In basic school teaching plans, compulsory subjects are allocated 90% of the total number of lessons fixed by the Ministry of Education and Science, an arrangement which involves a minimum number of compulsory lessons at level B. The distribution of the remaining hours of teaching to compulsory and optional subjects is decided by schools on the basis of pupil requirements.

The maximum number of 27-31 centrally imposed compulsory lessons may thus be allocated to S-level lessons at the initiative of the school. Normally, schools adopting S-level teaching develop their own individual syllabus *(individualioji programa)* approved by the Ministry (cf. 3.1.2 above). From form 5, they may offer S-level foreign languages, fine arts, music, and physical training.

The weekly distribution of lessons for compulsory subjects at basic school level is shown below:

Form / Subject	5	6	7	8	9
I. CURRICULUM SUBJECTS					
Moral education (religion or ethics)	1	1	1	1	1
A. LANGUAGES					
Lithuanian language	5-6	5-6	5-6	4-5	5
Foreign language (1st)	3-4	3	3	3	3
Foreign language (2nd)	–	2-3	2-3	2-3	2-3
Elective subjects	–	–	–	–	–
B. NATURAL SCIENCES AND MATHEMATICS					
Mathematics	4-5	4-5	4-5	4	4
Nature and man	2	2	–	–	–
Biology	–	–	2	1-2	2
Physics	–	–	1	2	2
Chemistry	–	–	–	2	2
Elective subjects	–	–	–	–	–
C. SOCIAL SCIENCES					
History	2	2	1.5-2	2	2
Basics of civic society	–	–	0.5-0	1-2	–
Geography	–	2	2	1-2	2
D. FINE ARTS AND CRAFTS, PHYSICAL TRAINING					
Fine arts	1	1	1	1	1
Music	1	1	1	1	1
Crafts	2	2	2	2	1-2
Physical training	2-3	2-3	2-3	2-3	2-3
Civil safety, traffic safety	–	–	–	–	–
Elective subjects	–	–	–	–	–
Overall: for a 5-day school week	23	27	28	28	30
Number of lessons distributed at the school's discretion*	4	2	2	3	1
Maximum number of compulsory lessons for a 5-day school week	27	29	30	31	31

* 1 lesson for 5-6 and 3 lessons for 3-4; 2 lessons for 4-5 and 2 lessons for 2-3; 2 lessons for 4-5 and 1 lesson for 2-3; 3 lessons for 1-2 and 2 lessons for 2; 1 lesson for 2 and 1 lesson for 2; 0.5 lesson for 1.5-2 and 0.5 lesson for 0.5-0.

As in primary schools, teachers are free to choose their **teaching methods**. Among the more common methods are discussions, team work, modelling, 'brain storming', project design, experimentation, interviewing, analysis and research, and out-of-school assignments. Integrated instruction, and methods geared to the needs of individual pupils are all actively promoted.

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3.2.3. Assessment

Assessment distinguishes three levels:

- an individual level concerned with the progress of a particular pupil as viewed personally by the teacher;
- a group level reflecting the teacher's perception of the class as a whole;
- the official national level with its natural concern for transmitting and upholding sound standards throughout the school.

In all end-of-term and end-of-year assessments in basic schools, the attainment of pupils is measured by means of a 10-point system even though teachers may use other systems with the approval of the school. Teachers may also choose whether assessment should be based on written or oral tests, ongoing credits or projects, and how often they should be assigned.

Although, up to the age of 16, pupils whose performance is unsatisfactory (1-3 points) may move on to a higher class with the agreement of their parents, they cannot take basic school-leaving examinations until they have improved this performance with a higher score. If, at 16, the results are still unsatisfactory, they are offered education in another type of institution.

Examinations on completion of basic school are approved by the Ministry, and are compulsory for all pupils with 4-10 points in their end-of-year assessments. They are devised by expert groups, usually on the basis of tests, with reference to school teaching programmes. The results are assessed by specialist commissions of teachers from the same school in the subjects concerned.

On completion of basic school, pupils are awarded a leaving certificate showing their assessment based on the 10-point system in the subjects examined. The certificate entitles them to enter a vocational school and some colleges.

3.2.4. Teacher training

Lower and upper secondary teachers receive training as subject specialists. Graduates of university-level teacher training institutions are awarded the Diploma of Higher Education (the Bachelor's Diploma) entitling them to teach at all levels of secondary school, including gymnasiums. Their studies may involve a course for a Bachelor's degree lasting four to five years (five if an additional specialisation is acquired), as well as a study programme for a Master's degree lasting a further one-and-a-half to two years. Some university-level higher education institutions, Vilnius University among them, offer one-year teacher training programmes to holders of the Bachelor's diploma, upon completion of which the Certificate of Teaching Qualification is awarded.

Those who graduate from teacher training colleges are awarded the Diploma of College Education, entitling them to teach their subject(s) in basic school. Courses last four years if they specialise in more than one subject. Otherwise they last for three.

Teachers are state employees recruited by the school head. They are tenured and may work either full-time or part-time.

At present in Lithuania, there are 30 teacher education centres, and seven institutions of in-service teacher training at various institutes and universities.

According to two Ministry Resolutions of 1995 and 1998 respectively, all teachers are entitled to a maximum of 50 and a minimum of 15 paid days of in-service training over a five-year period, with official assessment 'at the expense of an educational institution'.

In-service training may be either compulsory (necessary for the implementation of the state educational programme, or teacher assessment in the case of poor teaching performance), or voluntary. Training at the wish of teachers is encouraged by institutions and supported by the State, provided its content corresponds to the interests of the educational system.

Furthermore, training may be continuous or occasional. Ideally, occasional training lasts one to three working days comprising a single session, while its maximum length is ten. Teachers who undergo training

for which they have to account, receive certificates from in-service training institutions. Continuous training, on the other hand, is organised in the form of several such sessions. Teachers choose either the whole of a proposed training programme or the parts of relevance to them. Training is considered preferable when pupils are on holiday.

There is a significant shortage of teachers, not so much in terms of particular levels of secondary education, as in certain subjects in places where there are no teacher training institutions.

The Ministry of Education and Science is attempting to remedy this by organising retraining for non-specialists in institutions of higher education, vocational colleges and the Lithuanian In-Service Teacher Training Institute. Priority for admission to such courses goes to teachers who are unemployed or likely to become so. As a result, they get a chance to qualify. They are given an opportunity to qualify as teachers of subjects for which there is considerable demand, including foreign languages, Lithuanian, house-craft and technical skills, informatics and fine arts. Older teachers whose former training does not match the requirements of today's schools are also retrained.

3.2.5. Statistics

In 1996/97, basic and secondary institutions, including here, youth, special, and adult schools, enrolled 551 181 pupils and employed 47 419 teachers, giving a pupil/teacher ratio of 11.62.

In 1997/98 there were 594 basic schools existing as autonomous educational institutions.

Number of young people in secondary education, and their percentage within the population of the same age-group, 1997

Educational level	Age-group	Number of pupils registered	Percentage of pupils registered within the population of the same age-group
Basic (lower secondary)	11-15	263 653	93.4
Upper secondary	16-18	130 709	82.8

Number of schools and pupils at the beginning of the 1997/98 school year

Type of school	Number of schools	Number of pupils
Basic	594	61 817
Secondary	707	429 178
Gymansium	42	13 990
Youth	22	2 100

In 1997/98, 3916 pupils were offered provision in schools of special education.

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4. Post-compulsory secondary school

Students leaving compulsory school can continue their studies in one of the following institutions: ***secondary schools, gymnasia, vocational schools, some boarding and special education schools***.

With the transition from the five-year to six-year basic school, upper secondary education is currently offered in the last three years of schooling (forms 10-12). At public educational institutions, it is free of charge.

To enter an upper secondary school, pupils must have a certificate testifying to the completion of lower secondary education. However, in Lithuania, no schools offer exclusively upper secondary education. Instead, they normally cover at least lower and upper secondary levels, and sometimes primary level too. Consequently, school premises for general education usually accommodate large numbers of pupils, especially in the cities. Overall, there are 704 such secondary schools, with 90.5% of them operating one daily shift of pupils, and the remainder, two. The former cater for 92.3% of all pupils, while those with a double shift account for 7.7%. The average number of pupils in a secondary school for general education is 610.

The main aim of upper secondary education is to enable pupils to enter any type of college or university-level higher education. Gymnasiums cover the last four years of secondary education. Pupils are admitted according to school criteria, particularly as regards performance, maturity and motivation. Normally, gymnasiums provide a more advanced level of education to academically inclined pupils than other secondary schools. They offer them the opportunity to choose between various branches of study, including humanities, science, and fine arts. Gymnasium school leavers are encouraged to enter university-level higher education institutions.

The goal of vocational schools is to offer vocational qualifications in addition to general upper secondary education.

4.1. School organisation

The school council decides on the weekly organisation of lessons, including (once again) their scheduling over a five-day week, a six-day week, or both. Pupils in the last year of secondary school, however, work five days a week. The beginning of the school year is 1 September, while the year in the last (12th) form ends on 26 May. It is organised over three terms (or in some gymnasiums, two semesters), and lasts 195 days.

As at primary schools, regular schooling usually takes place in the daytime, whereas extra-curricular activity may be outside school hours or in the evening. For optional or extra-curricular subjects, pupils from different classes of the same year may be brought together.

Textbooks are selected from a ministerially approved list, and schools get money to buy both books and teaching material.

4.2. Curriculum

With the ongoing transition to the six-year basic school, teaching plans for three-year secondary school are currently being implemented. Plans establish compulsory (core) subjects and optional ones, together with the number of lessons in each week. At upper secondary level the total number of 45-minute lessons is 32.

There are 16 compulsory subjects, as follows: moral education (religion or ethics), Lithuanian (the language), two foreign languages, mathematics, computer science, physics, astronomy, chemistry, biology, history, geography, political sciences, fine arts, music and physical training.

As with basic school, compulsory subjects may be allocated a variable number of lessons, depending on the school emphasis, or the level chosen by the pupil.

At upper secondary level, instruction may be offered at **B** (basic, or general), **A** (advanced) or **S** (intensified) curricular levels. The teaching plans centrally established by the Ministry allocate around 65 % of the

compulsory number of lessons, involving a **minimum** number, over the different subjects. To follow level B, a minimum of 28 lessons are prescribed. The distribution of the remaining time over both compulsory and optional subjects is carried out by the school, in the light of its pupils' needs.

Level A involves a **median** number of lessons comprising those distributed by the Ministry and those allocated at the school's discretion. It is defined in terms of detailed teaching programmes for each subject on the basis of the general curriculum framework, known as *Bendrosios programos*. Level S consists of a **maximum** 32 lessons, again made up of those allocated by the Ministry and those scheduled by the school. Normally, schools following level **S** develop their own ministerially approved individual syllabus, the *individualioji programa*.

Pupils may choose five subjects at level A, or not more than two subjects at level S. They may also decide whether they take school-leaving examinations at level B or A, and choose their optional subjects from several which may include a third foreign language, philosophy, psychology, basics of law, computer programming and office work, and applied economics. In fact, the overall list of optional subjects will depend on the school's own desired emphasis, as well as parental requests and the general practicability of the proposals.

Optional subjects are included in those distributed at the discretion of the school, with the overall arrangements shown in the following diagram.

Subject \ Form	10		11		12	
1. CURRICULUM SUBJECTS Morals education (religion or ethics)	1		1		1	
A. LANGUAGES Lithuanian language Foreign language (1st) Foreign language (2nd) Elective subjects	4-6 2-4 2-3 –		4-6 2-4 2-3 –		4-6 2-4 2-3 –	
A. Overall: for a 5-day school week	8		8		8	
B. NATURAL SCIENCES AND MATHEMATICS Mathematics Informatics Physics Astronomy Chemistry Biology Elective subjects	3-5 1-2 2-4 – 2-3 1-2 –	6*	3-5 0-2 2-4 – 1-3 1-3 –	10*	3-5 – 3-5 – 1-2 1-2 –	10*
B. Overall: for a 5-day school week	9		7		8	
C. SOCIAL SCIENCES History Geography Political sciences	2-3 2 –		1-2 – 1-2		1-3 – 0-2	
C. Overall: for a 5-day school week	4		2		1	
D. FINE ARTS AND CRAFTS, PHYSICAL TRAINING Fine arts Music Physical training Civil safety Elective subjects	1-2 1-2 2-3 – –		1-2 1-2 2-3 – –		1-2 1-2 2-3 – –	
D. Overall: for a 5-day school week	4		4		4	
Overall: for a 5-day school week	26		22		22	
Number of lessons distributed at the school's discretion*	6		10		10	
Maximum number of compulsory lessons for a 5-day school week	32		32		32	

Once again, teachers are free to choose their **methods** which include discussion, projects, interviewing and the other kinds of approach to which reference has already been made at the end of section 3.2.2.

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4.3. Assessment

At upper secondary level, pupil assessment is once again essentially based on a 10-point system, as described for basic education in section 3.2.3. On completion of the full 12 years of secondary school, a school-leaving (maturity) certificate is awarded, stipulating the examinations passed, their level and points assessment, as well as giving similar information on all subjects for the end of the 12th school year or the year the course in a subject has been completed.

School-leaving certificates entitle their holders to enter any Lithuanian higher education institution, vocational school or college. Yet precisely which kind of institution they attend will be determined by their marks in the maturity certificate, as well as their all-round knowledge and ability. And higher education institutions establish their own criteria to help them decide which young people they are going to admit. Gymnasium leavers are encouraged to enter university-level institutions if possible. At present, higher education institutions enrol some 50% of all school-leavers, vocational colleges, 27%, and vocational schools, 10%.

Those unable to enrol in higher education institutions, vocational schools or colleges may be trained to practise a trade in adult education centres.

Currently, an EU PHARE Higher Education Reform in Lithuania (HERIL) is under way. One of its sub-programmes – **National Assessment** – has been designed to improve the system of admission to higher education, partly with a view to reconciling the secondary school-leaving examinations and entrance examinations to higher education through the creation of a system of external school-leaving examinations. The immediate goal of the **National Assessment** sub-programme is thus a reform of secondary school-leaving examinations in four subjects, namely Lithuanian language, mathematics, biology and history. The scheme was piloted in one of the counties in the spring of 1998.

4.4. Teachers

Upper secondary school teachers have to hold the (Bachelor's) Diploma of Higher Education, entitling them to teach at all levels of secondary school (including gymnasiums). The period of study involved has already been noted at the start of section 2.3. Information on in-service training is given in section 3.2.4.

4.5. Statistics

In 1997/98, 130 709 pupils taught at upper secondary level accounted for 82.8% of the 16-18-year-old age-group. The pupil/teacher ratio was 10.8, and the average number of pupils in a class, 22.3 (13.3 in rural areas, and 19.1 in urban ones). And in 1997, 8.4% of secondary school leavers continued their education in vocational schools, 31.4% in colleges, and 44.7% in higher education.

Number of schools for general education, and their pupils, 1997/98

Type of school	Number	Number of pupils
Youth	22	2 078
Basic	594	61 817
Secondary	707	429 178
Gymnasium	42	13 990
Special education	56	7 565
Adult	24	11 835

In 1997/98, these institutions employed 47 000 teachers.

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5. Initial vocational training

Framework

Like most other educational activity, initial vocational education comes under the Ministry of Education and Science which inherited the network of vocational technical schools in the former Soviet Union. With the transition to a market economy and discontinuation of the compulsory transfer of pupils of poor learning performance to these schools, there was an urgent need **to reform the system** so that training responded better to the wishes of young people and the needs of the labour market.

Although reform started in 1990, it has really gathered pace since 1994. While initiatives under the PHARE programme have been especially significant in this respect, several **vocational institutions** have also been founded, including the Lithuanian Council of Vocational Training, the Methodological Centre for Vocational Education and Training, the National Standards Group, the County Vocational Education and Training Boards, the Centre for Vocational Education and Research at Vyautas Magnus University, and the National Resource Centre.

The October 1997 **Law on Vocational Education and Training** sets out a full reform of the system, defining its key institutions, responsibilities and processes. The main institutions are the Ministry of Education and Science (responsible for national policy), and the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (concerned with labour market vocational training policy), as well as other ministries, institutions of local administration, the Lithuanian Vocational Education and Training Council and the social partners.

The Lithuanian Council of Vocational Education and Training has the role of an **advisory body**. In line with government policy for involving the social partners, the Council is formed from equal numbers of participants from state authorities and organisations representing the interests of both employers and employees.

The state shares **the right to found vocational schools and colleges** with private interests.

Cooperation with the social partners is conducted in the following main areas:

- initiation of training in new trades and skills;
- the development of new curricula;
- trainee placements for practical training;
- the establishment of national standards for vocational education and training;
- setting of, and participation in, the final examinations needed to qualify;
- participation in the expert commissions of the Ministry of Education and Science;
- renovation and modernisation of school facilities for practical training.

General principles for funding and quality control are established on a centralised basis. In the area of initial vocational training, responsibility for these matters lies with the Ministry of Education and Science, but training within the labour market system comes under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. However, as the latter is not considered a part of initial vocational education and training, information on it is not included here.

Funding of institutions depends on their student enrolment, as well as the viability and flexibility of their training programmes. State orders for training are made in cooperation with the administrative and employers' organisations of the regions concerned.

Vocational education and training is currently provided in several types of institution, as follows:
- vocational schools,
- vocational colleges;

Each type of institution offers different kinds and levels of provision.

5.1. Organisation

Vocational schools

Four options of vocational school training have been introduced since 1990/91.

The **first** is aimed at young people who have not finished basic school. By undergoing this option, they may do so, and also acquire very simple qualifications. Courses usually last two years.

Those wishing to embark on the **second option** have to finish basic school. While pupils who attend this option obtain professional qualifications, essential economic training, and general cultural instruction, they are not awarded a secondary school certificate. Studies last for three years.

The **third option** is aimed at those who have finished basic school. As a result of this option, they can acquire both professional qualifications and a secondary school certificate. Here, courses last for four years.

Finally, the **fourth option** is aimed at those who have finished their upper secondary schooling but are not academically inclined, and prefer to be trained as workers. Depending on the complexity of the prospective occupation, the duration of studies will be between one and two years.

Initial vocational training institutions enrol pupils aged at least 14. The order and conditions of admission are determined by the founder of the institution. Tuition at vocational schools is free, and pupils making good progress receive grants.

Vocational Colleges provide students of any age who have completed upper secondary school, or third- and fourth-option vocational schools, with opportunities for free specialised training. Converted from former technical schools, these colleges provide higher vocational (non-university) training, equivalent to level 5 of the International Standard Classification for Education (ISCED). Those admitted do not have to take entrance examinations, as the results of school-leaving examinations are taken into account, although study aptitude tests are sometimes held. Again, students displaying noteworthy progress are eligible for grants. Foreign students pay a flat-rate tuition fee, from which those undergoing training in accordance with state cooperation agreements, and Lithuanians living abroad are exempt.

Full-time training courses last three to four school years. The duration of extramural (part-time/distance) studies (adult training) is usually one year longer.

5.2. Curriculum

The curricular content of training in state-recognised vocational sectors consists of a core part, for which the Ministry of Education and Science is responsible, and an optional part administered directly by the individual schools.

Only the main guidelines for restructuring curricular content have been laid down. They reject narrow specialisation, emphasising that all students should have a basic knowledge of economics, and that curricula should correspond to labour market needs.

The curricula are basically designed by the schools themselves, in accordance with general ministerial requirements. New teaching programmes are revised by panels of experts, including employer representatives, and approved by the Minister of Education and Science. Vocational schools have to review their curricula every five years and, in practice, this happens more frequently still.

In designing curricula, the need for practical training to account for around 70% of the total time allotted to subjects is emphasised. Work safety and environmental issues are being integrated into the overall package of subjects. The number of teaching hours in general education subjects, in the above-mentioned third option of the curriculum, should correspond to the number in the secondary school general curriculum. Courses in foreign languages and information technologies are optional in the first, second and fourth options, and compulsory in the third option. In the first option, 59 hours a year are assigned to these courses, in the second option 120 hours, and in the fourth, 80.

At the majority of vocational schools, practical training includes training in the school workshops, and comprehensive training and practical activity in firms.

Lithuania has also introduced a **dual system** under which all vocational training and practice is on an in-company basis. About 1% of students in the system benefit from this approach.

In vocational colleges, the school year lasts 42 weeks (including examinations). Generally, it falls into two terms (autumn and spring) of similar length. The Register of Study and Training Programmes lists

approximately 140 study programmes at college level, classified into 14 groups. As with vocational schools, college study programmes are designed by colleges themselves, subject to revision by Ministry of Education and Science experts and the approval of the Minister. As also in the case of vocational schools, colleges place considerable emphasis on practical training which accounts for no less than 30% of all study time. Theoretical subjects are normally of an applied nature.

In vocational schools, the textbooks used for general education are the same as those in secondary schools. The books used in vocational training itself are either approved by Lithuanian experts, or translations of recommended foreign textbooks. However, the main support has consisted of training packages prepared by the instructors themselves, on the basis of advice from EU experts under the PHARE Programme. All such material is stored in the National Resource Centre, in order to relay experience gained in the field.

5.3. Assessment/Guidance

The knowledge and professional skills of vocational school students are, once again, assessed within the 10-point system. Teaching of theoretical subjects concludes with an evaluation of what students have learnt, using a credit system or an examination, in accordance with the teaching plans. Achievements in the course of practical training are recorded as 'accomplished' or 'unaccomplished' in the student notebook. A professional qualification is awarded to students who have followed the whole of the theoretical and practical course of training, and passed the final examination consisting of a comprehensive theoretical part and a demonstration of practical skills.

To conduct exams, an impartial qualification commission of employers, which is approved by the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts, is set up. Practical assignments are undertaken only after the theoretical part of the examination has been passed.

The state-approved **qualifications** are the certificate of qualification, and the diploma of a qualified worker. Trainees who have completed the first option of initial vocational training and passed the examinations involved, are awarded the certificate. Those who have completed training in the second, third and fourth options, and passed the examinations for a qualified worker, are awarded the diploma.

A service for **vocational guidance** and psychological consultation has been started in six major cities, and the Ministry of Education and Science has initiated the establishment of the Vocational Guidance Centre. Regional centres have also been set up in all 10 counties. Vocational guidance includes consultations and information on all questions concerning the choice of an occupation, and use is made of computer databases and specialised publications. Individual and group psychological consultation is also possible.

As regards **vocational colleges**, each term concludes with a set of no more than four examinations, with a 10-point system for assessment. Courses as a whole are completed with a final examination, or a diploma project. Students who pass are awarded a **State Diploma of College Graduation** indicating the college, the study programme and the qualification acquired for a specific occupation that its holder can enter.

5.4. Teachers

In fact, there are no trainers as such, with qualifications especially geared to vocational schools. Instead, the activity is performed by teachers of general education and vocational subjects respectively, as well as instructors, known as foremen, who help students acquire practical skills in firms.

Staff in all three groups should ideally be adequately qualified to work with trainees in terms of the appropriate discipline, teaching methods and psychology. Yet this is not always the case. Teachers in general education are often graduates from the teacher training colleges or universities, whereas those who teach vocational subjects invariably have only a qualification in engineering.

College teachers are graduates from university-level higher education institutions. Teachers who, at the most, have just an engineering qualification have to acquire an additional qualification over the first year of their teaching career. Efforts are made for vocational subjects to be taught by persons with research, practical or creative experience.

The issue of appropriate qualifications for teachers of vocational schools and colleges is now being addressed through in-service training. Since 1994, four kinds of qualification have been introduced. In vocational schools, these are vocational teacher *(profesijos mokytojas)*, senior vocational teacher *(vyresnysis profesijos mokytojas)*, vocational teacher-methodologist *(profesijos mokytojas–metodininkas)* and vocational teacher-expert *(profesijos mokytojas-ekspertas)*. In vocational colleges, the categories are assistant teacher *(dėstytojas asistentas)*, teacher *(dėstytojas)*, senior teacher *(vyresnysis dėstytojas)* and expert teacher *(dėstytojas ekspertas)*. Teacher methodologists and experts at vocational schools are assessed by commissions at the Lithuanian Teacher In-Service Training Institute, while those concentrating on a lower kind of qualification are evaluated by a commission at the school. In colleges, entrants to the lower categories of assistant teacher and teacher are similarly approved by commissions at the colleges themselves, while senior and expert teachers are assessed, on recommendation of the college concerned, by the General Commission for Assessment of College Teachers at the Ministry of Education and Science. The general regulations for assessment are drawn up by the Ministry, and the responsibility for supervision lies with the county education departments.

5.5. Statistics

Number of students who have completed the various options in vocational education and training, 1996/97

	Number of pupils	%
Option	6 598	12.8
1st	18 574	36.0
2nd	22 100	42.8
3rd	4 379	8.5
4th	51 651	100

Kinds of subjects taught at vocational schools

Length of training	Vocational training subjects	General education subjects	General cultural education	Extra-curricular education
1st option: 3 years	62%	18.4%	15%	5%
2nd option: 3 years	70.4%		22.7%	6.9%
3rd option: 4 years	46%	36.6%	8.1%	9.3%
4th option: 1 year	80.7%		15%	4.2%
4th option: 1.5 years	84.2%		11.6%	4.2%
4th option: 2 years	85.4%		10.4%	4.2%

Numbers of vocational school teachers, 1996/97

Total number: of which female teachers %	4 760 2 916 61.3
Full-time teachers	3 713
Part-time teachers	1 047

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Educational level of vocational school teachers, 1996/97

Educational level	
Higher, total number % of the total number of teachers	3 113 65.4
of which have approved teacher qualification % of the total number	1 587 51.0
College % of the total number	1 372 28.8
Secondary % of the total number	275 5.8
Teaching staff total	4 760

6. Higher education

In 1998, the higher education system consisted of 15 higher education institutions comprising nine universities, five academies and one institute which provides higher education at three academic levels (basic, specialised and doctoral) discussed further in Section 7.5. below.

As yet, there are no private higher education institutions in Lithuania.

6.1. Admission requirements

A secondary school-leaving certificate or its equivalent (which includes the International Baccalaureate) is required for admission to higher education institutions.

The conditions governing admission for Lithuanian applicants are the results of the school-leaving examinations recorded in the school-leaving certificate, and the results of entrance examinations, if required. Regulations for such examinations are set by the individual institutions themselves.

Further information about a recent attempt to improve the system of admission to higher education is given at the end of Section 4.3.

Foreign applicants are admitted, either by signing an agreement with the institution concerned, or as exchange students within the framework of international programmes and bilateral agreements. Students from abroad are required to enrol in a one- or two-year introductory Lithuanian language programme, so as to attend courses given in the language in the second or third year of studies at the latest.

Admission is administered by the individual institutions. The deadline for application varies from one institution to the next. Generally, complete applications should be submitted from the beginning of June until 31 August at the latest.

6.2. Fees/Financial aid for students

Foreign students are charged tuition fees varying between USD 1 300 and USD 3 000 a year. The amount which, again, is set by the individual institutions includes the cost of using libraries, laboratories, medical services and, sometimes, accommodation. State scholarships are granted to Lithuanian students on the basis of attainment and social considerations. Study loans are also available for full-time students. A provision regarding the free movement of students and equal treatment, in accordance with the case law of the European Court of Justice, is stipulated in the new draft law on research and higher education currently under preparation.

According to a 1996 government resolution, a system of state scholarships is currently being established to support Lithuanian citizens pursuing study or research abroad, as well as foreigners studying or doing research in Lithuania. Scholarships for exchange students are granted for one to ten months, under the terms of bilateral agreements with the Czech Republic, Denmark, Poland, Spain and other countries.

As already mentioned in Section 1.6, the Government has required that a certain number of state-maintained student places should be available at higher education institutions. Students who secure one do not have to pay tuition fees and usually get grants. Alongside these places, higher education institutions are entitled to establish a certain number of additional places for students who do pay fees.

6.3. Academic year

The academic year is divided into two semesters, autumn (usually from September to January), and spring (February to June).

6.4. Courses

Students in higher education can follow either full-time, part-time (or evening) and extramural (or distance) courses. Major fields of study offered are education, humanities, theology, fine and applied arts, law, social sciences, economics and business administration, natural sciences, engineering, architecture, medical sciences, agriculture and forestry.

Teaching methods are varied, but lectures and seminars are the approach most often employed. Experimental and research work, projects, and written papers are also sometimes adopted, in addition to practical activity for students.

6.5. Assessment/Qualification

Three levels of higher education may be distinguished. The first, or basic, level consists of a four- to five-year Bachelor's degree, or a professional qualification equivalent to the degree depending on the kind of curriculum followed. A few universities award both the degree and a professional teaching qualification, following successful completion of the basic degree course and then a further year of professional studies. Students are formally recognised as having higher education upon satisfactory completion of four-year basic studies.

This basic level may be followed by the second level comprising a one-and-a-half to two-year Master's degree (see section 2.3.), or specialised professional qualification – which, here again, may be equivalent to the degree, depending on the curriculum selected – for occupations such as economist, sociologist, or engineer.

Furthermore, so-called single-stage programmes may include both basic and specialised professional studies. For example, a professional qualification in medicine is awarded upon completion of a single-stage programme lasting six years. Other fields covered by these programmes include veterinary medicine, dentistry, pharmacy law (in Vilnius University) and agriculture. In the case of students who undertake single-stage programmes, their higher education is only recognised on satisfactory completion of the entire programme

A two- or three-week examination period is usually arranged at the end of each semester. During this period, students prepare for and take the examinations prescribed for that session. Forms of examination (oral, written, or other) are decided by the teacher, and students also have to write a course paper during the school year.

Final examinations for Bachelor's and Master's degrees are taken in accordance with government requirements. Student performance in them is assessed by a special commission set up by decision of the Dean (head of administration) of the faculty concerned.

The third level of higher education is that of doctoral studies. Doctorates are usually awarded after candidates have already obtained a Master's degree or a specialised professional qualification equivalent to it. A doctorate takes no more than four years, of which up to one-and-a-half or two years are spent attending doctoral courses.

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On their completion, a thesis has to be prepared and satisfactorily defended. Doctoral studies may be organised jointly by higher education and research institutions.

6.6. Teachers

All teaching staff are elected at the Faculty Councils of higher education institutions.

The lowest teaching position is that of *asistentas* (assistant). Applicants are required to hold a Master's degree with, preferably, some experience of research.

The position of *vyresnysis asistentas* (senior assistant) does not require a scientific degree. It can be occupied for only two terms if the staff member concerned has not defended a doctoral thesis. Research activity has to be undertaken, and senior assistants are not able to teach Master's students.

A docentas (docent or associated professor) should hold a scientific degree or be awarded the academic title of *docentas* for significant commitment to teaching. Docents normally publish articles on the basis of original research, and teach Master's students.

A *profesorius* (professor) is the highest teaching position. Professors are normally holders of the highest possible academic degree. A significant publications record is required, along with a prominent contribution to departmental faculty research. Professors are also usually involved in training young scientists.

All teaching positions can be occupied for up to five years renewable subject to satisfactory professional performance. During that time, it is expected that staff achieve a certain minimum output of scientific and teaching publications.

Teachers may, if they wish, take a year's leave once in every five-year period to update their professional knowledge.

Study visits abroad are widespread, as a result of participation in international teacher and student exchange programmes.

According to the plan approved by the Rector of specialised higher education institutions (such as the Law Academy), teachers may also update their expertise in appropriate – and normally university-level – institutions, depending on the subject or sector concerned.

6.7. Statistics

Students in higher education institutions, by type of course, 1997/98

Types of course	Numbers of students (all levels)
Full-time	53 556
Part-time (evening)	2 926
Part-time (extramural/distance)	10 586

Students in higher education institutions, by level of study, 1997/98

	All levels of study	Bachelor's	Master's	Doctoral
Students	67 068	52 584	13 908	1 476
of which male	28 351	22 304	5 288	759
female	38 717	30 280	7 720	717
Percentage				
of male students	42.3	42.4	40.7	51.4
of female students	57.7	57.6	59.3	48.6

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Educational background of entrants to higher education institutions, 1997/98

Students matriculated	17 935
of which were graduates of	
Secondary schools	15 709
Vocational colleges	1 603
Vocational schools	376
Schools of higher education	247

In 1997/98, 9214 teachers at the 15 university-level institutions offered higher education to 67 068 students (giving a student/teacher ratio of 7.27).

In the same year, 6 586 of the teachers constituted the main body of academic staff, while 2 574 worked as 'non-primary' staff; 54 foreign teachers were also employed. Out of all teachers, 2 768 held a doctorate, and 472 a habilitated doctor's degree, while 2 333 were docents, and 518 full professors.

1994 and 1997 suggests increasing participation in continuing education and training courses, rising from 15% to 25 %.

Slovenia

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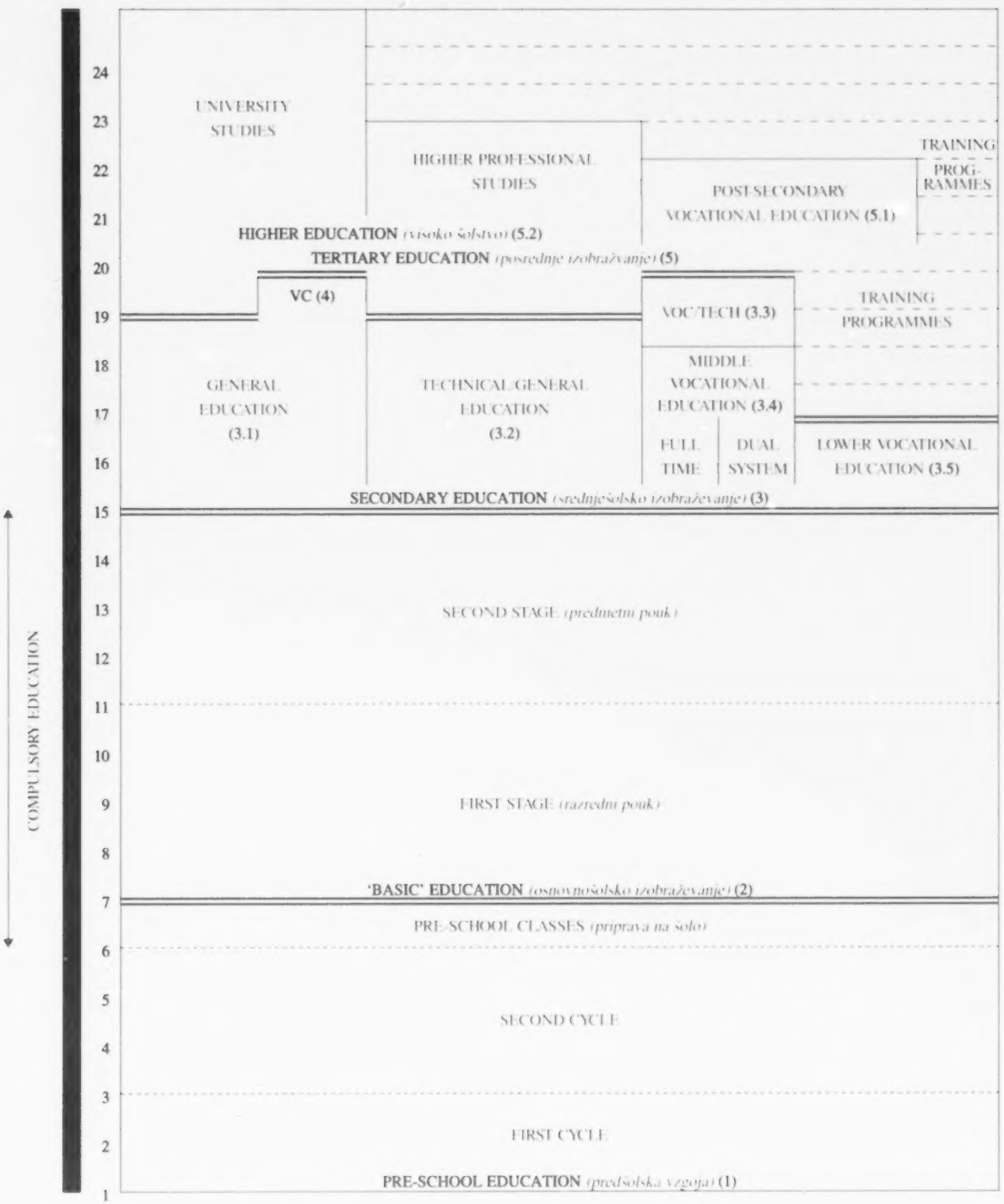
Slovenia in 1997



..... = Division in the level / type of education

- - - - - - - = Alternative beginning or end of level / type of education

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(1) **Pre-school education** *(predšolska vzgoja)* covers five years, from 1 to 6 years of age. Pre-school education is divided into two cycles, the first cycle lasting from 1 to 3 years of age and the second from 3 to 6 years of age. Between the ages of 6 and 7, all pre-school children have to attend a compulsory one-year pre-school class *(priprava na osnovno šolo)* before entering elementary school.

(2) **'Basic' education*** *(osnovnošolsko izobraževanje)* is compulsory and covers 8 years, from 7 to 15 years of age.

(3) **Post-Compulsory Secondary education** *(srednješolsko izobraževanje)* consists of

- 3.1 general academic courses (*gymnasium* - 4 years),
- 3.2 technical courses (4 years, exceptionally 5 years); technical courses which comprise *matura classes* also provide direct access to university studies if the students have passed the *matura* examination
- 3.3 vocational/technical courses (3 + 2 years)
- 3.4 vocational courses (3 years)
- 3.5 lower vocational courses (2 years).

(4) **Post-secondary non-tertiary vocational courses** *(poklicni tečaj)* last up to 1 year. Those students who do not pass the *matura* and those who decide to change their profession can obtain vocational education by completing these vocational courses. Courses of this type provide access to employment.

(5) **Tertiary education** *(posrednje izobraževanje)* consists of

- **5.1 post-secondary vocational education** *(višje šolstvo)* which is considered as a separate sub-system of education and
- **5.2 higher education** *(visoko šolstvo)*, **university studies** *(univerzatetni študij)* and **higher professional studies** *(visokošolski strokovni študij)*.

* This term exists in various countries and languages; "basic" education is the term used for "*... the countries where primary education and the first stage of secondary education are integrated ...*" (ISCED 1997, Revised version III (UNESCO, November 1997)) or "*... in the countries where there is no systems break between primary and lower secondary education; where in such cases "basic education" lasts for more then 6 years, only the first 6 years should be counted as primary education ...*" (OECD Instruction Guide for Classifying National Educational programmes in International Data Collections, OECD, INES, April 1998).

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Slovenia

1. Responsibilities and administration

1.1. Background

Slovenia has an area of 20,273 km² and a population of 2 million. 87% of the inhabitants are Slovenes by ethnic origin. Two indigenous ethnic minorities live in Slovenia: Hungarian (0.42% of total population) and Italian (0.15% of total population). There are also Romanies, Albanians, Montenegrins, Croats, Macedonians, Muslims, Serbs and others undeclared by ethnic affiliation.

The official language is Slovenian while, in areas inhabited by members of the Italian and Hungarian minorities, Hungarian and Italian are also official languages. Slovenia became an independent country in 1991 after the break up of Yugoslavia. Slovenia is a unitary state with a republican form of government.

The first multi-party elections took place in 1990. Since then a Parliament has been put together by various parties from the left and right. The Coalition Government was formed with members of the Liberal Democrats of Slovenia, the Slovenian People's Party and the Democratic Party of Retired Persons of Slovenia. The Parliament elects the Prime Minister at the proposal of the President. Governmental power is fully exercised by the Prime Minister, who is appointed by the most powerful political party, the Liberal Democrats of Slovenia.

Some ministries are organised into **regional offices** *(upravne enote)* (but not the Ministry of Education and Sport) or more **local communities** *(lokalne skupnosti)* to perform certain administrative tasks which are determined by law.

147 new **municipalities** *(občine)* were established in 1995 and the municipal council and mayoral elections were held at the end of 1994. The municipalities usually perform only local tasks. They are normally financed from their own sources, but economically underdeveloped municipalities receive additional state funding.

The main religious persuasion is Catholicism. 70% of the inhabitants are Catholic, 2% Orthodox, 1.5% Islamic, 1% Protestant, 1.5% other religious groups (Jewish, pro-Oriental groups, etc.), while 24% do not express any religious affiliation.

In 1997, 11% of the working population was employed in agriculture, 42% in industry and 47% in the tertiary sector. The unemployment rate was 7.1%.

1.2. Basic principles of the education system

The basis for the present system of education and its future development is the *White Paper on Education in the Republic of Slovenia*, published in 1995. It was written in Slovenian (in 1996 in English) in cooperation with many experts. The principles proposed in the *White Paper* laid the groundwork for legislation a year later. The new legislation (the Organisation and Funding of Education Act, the Pre-school Institutions Act, the Elementary School Act, the *Gymnasium* Act, the Secondary Technical and Vocational Education Act and the Adult Education Act, all adopted in February 1996) is based on the principles of **democracy, autonomy and equality of opportunity**. The basic principles of the Higher Education Act (1994) are the **autonomy** of universities and other higher education institutions, **deregulation, public accountability, equal opportunity, integrity of research and teaching, and freedom** to establish public and private higher education institutions.

1.3. Distribution of responsibilities

At the start of the 1990s, the administration of the Slovenian public education system was characterised by considerable centralisation. Sweeping changes concerning the authority to allocate financial and human resources in education occurred at the end of the 1980s. The system of self-determination taking place in numerous 'self-management interest communities' for education existed in the previous decade. In 1989, a new law abolished these communities, and a new system of organisation, administration and funding was implemented in 1991. Educational institutions have since then operated as public services.

Education in general is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Sport, apart from some education establishments that are jointly supervised by other ministries. The Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs has significant responsibilities for vocational education and education policy, for coordination among social partners and for the professions to be developed. The Ministry of Education and Sport, the State Employment Agency and the Ministry of Health provide funding to give higher education institutions special assistance for students with special needs. The Ministry of Science and Technology provides funding for higher education research activities. The National Employment Agency offers vocational guidance to young persons and adults and administers scholarships. The Ministry of the Interior provides funding for the education and training of the police and the training and advanced vocational training of clerical staff. The Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Education and Sport are responsible for the state budget and for expenditure in the field of education.

Laws on education are adopted by the National Assembly. Other regulations in compliance with the laws are adopted by the Minister and published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia.

1.4. Administration

Central level

The Ministry of Education and Sport is responsible for defining national policy on education and sport. Its prime responsibilities relate to the structuring and funding of the system, the management of publicly-run institutions, inspection procedures and financial aid. It prepares legislation in the fields of education and sport and is responsible for implementing the laws and the associated administrative decisions concerning pre-school, 'basic', secondary general and secondary and post-secondary vocational education, higher education, the education of children with special needs, music education, adult education, the education of Romanies and minorities, and Slovenian minorities in Austria, Italy and Hungary, supplementary courses in Slovenian language and culture for Slovenians around the world, and the in-service education and training of teachers.

The Ministry is headed by a **Minister** and five **Secretaries of State**. The Ministry of Education and Sport comprises several departments and three units. **The Education Development Unit** *(Urad za šolstvo)* co-ordinates the activities of the public institutions which are responsible for development and counselling in the field of education and the activities of the three national councils of experts. **The Youth Office** *(Urad za mlade)* is responsible for monitoring the situation of young people in society, improving the organisation and activities for young people and their associations, the promotion of youth social mobility, the promotion of information and counselling services for the young, the promotion of international youth exchanges, travel subsidies for children and young persons, the advancement of extramural activities for young persons, and the provision of conditions for the integration of youth into society. The **National Inspectorate for Education and Sport** *(Inšpektorat Republike Slovenije za šolstvo in šport)* supervises the implementation of laws, other regulations and administrative acts, setting out the organisation, financing and provision of activities carried out by pre-school institutions, schools and other institutions for education. The heads of the departments, the directors of the units and the Inspector General are directly accountable to the Minister. The law on the Organisation and Tasks of the Ministries defines the tasks of the units. The units are autonomous in performing their tasks according to the Law.

Three public institutions were set up by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia to carry out development and counselling: the **National Education Institute** *(Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo)* for pre-school, 'basic' and secondary general education, the **Centre of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training** *(Center Republike Slovenije za poklicno izobraževanje)* for vocational education and training, and the **Slovenian Adult Education Centre** *(Center Republike Slovenije za izobraževanje odraslih)* for adult education. They provide expertise for decisions by the national councils, monitor pilot projects, offer

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consulting services, organise the in-service training of teachers, and design methodologies for writing textbooks.

In addition, the Government set up the **National Examination Centre** *(Državni izpitni center)*, which is responsible for the state-wide assessment of pupils, students and adult learners.

Decisions on technical matters are taken and expert assistance in preparing legislation is offered by three councils of experts appointed by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia in accordance with the law: (1) the **Council of experts of the Republic of Slovenia for General education** *(Strokovni svet Republike Slovenije za splošno izobraževanje)*, (2) the **Council of experts of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational and Technical education** *(Strokovni svet Republike Slovenije za poklicno izobraževanje)*, and (3) the **Council of experts of the Republic of Slovenia for Adult education** *(Strokovni svet Republike Slovenije za izobraževanje odraslih)*. Councils of experts determine the contents of education curricula, approve textbooks and education materials, and propose criteria and standards for school equipment.

In compliance with the law, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia also appointed the **Council for Higher Education of the Republic of Slovenia** *(Svet za visoko šolstvo Republike Slovenije)*, which has somewhat different powers due to the specific characteristics of higher education. It is a government consultative body and consists of the representatives of universities, single-higher education institutions and other experts. It is legally empowered to accredit and evaluate new higher education institutions. University study and research programmes are approved by the senates of university member institutions (i.e. faculties, art academies and higher professional education institutions), subject to prior consent issued by the university senate.

Local level

The municipal authorities (**municipal council**-*občinski svet*-, the **mayor**-*župan*-) are responsible for the administration of pre-school education and to some extent of 'basic' education. The prevailing legislation and standards determined by law, and in part by standards at state level, have to be taken into account. Job classifications in pre-school institutions have to be approved by municipalities. The pre-school map is determined by municipalities.

Pre-school institutions, music schools and elementary schools are set up by municipalities. Public *gymnasiums* can also be established by city municipalities in agreement with the State. Public adult education institutions ('folk' high schools) can be set up by local communities or by the State. The Italian and Hungarian minorities are co-founders of public pre-school institutions and schools offering education in the languages of the minorities and bilingual education. The founder who sets up the school or pre-school is the owner of the institution and is also involved in management.

Institution level

The new legislation stipulates that school administrative bodies be established as a form of decentralisation of the state administration. Public pre-school institutions, i.e. public schools, have a **school council** *(svet šole)* made up of representatives of the founder, the employees, the parents and the pupils or students. The council has the following powers: to appoint and dismiss the head teacher of a public pre-school institution or public school, to approve the development programme and annual work programme, to decide on supplementary programmes and to make decisions concerning complaints lodged by pupils or students, employees or parents. The head teacher of a public pre-school institution or of a school is both a pedagogical leader and executive. In accordance with the law, his/her most important tasks are to organise, plan and manage the work of a pre-school institution or school, to prepare the development plan, to draft the annual plan and to manage the work of the pre-school teachers' or lecturers' assembly. He/she is responsible for implementing the programme and plan and for protecting the rights of children, pupils and students. With the approval of the founder, i.e. the Ministry of Education and Sport, he/she defines the systematisation of posts, decides on new working contracts and on the disciplinary accountability of the workers, represents and presents the pre-school institutions or school and performs other tasks according to the law and other regulations. A deputy head can be appointed in a pre-school institution or school.

Institutions of higher education have the right to independent regulation of their internal organisation and operations by their own constitution in accordance with the law. Universities and single-higher education institutions are legal entities. The organs of a university are the rector, the senate, the administrative board and the students' council.

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The **senate** *(senat)* has a right to independent regulation of its internal organisation, to adopt criteria for the award of qualifications and to award qualifications for teaching and research, to prepare and approve study and research programmes, to determine rules of study and the procedures and terms of student examinations, and to award vocational and academic qualifications in compliance with the law. The administrative board decides on commercial transactions and ensures the various commercial operations of higher education institutions. The **Rector** *(rektor)* is the academic head of a university. The **Dean** *(dekan)* or director is the academic head of a higher education institution. Managerial, administrative, vocational and technical tasks are performed by the secretariat of higher education institutions, which is managed by a secretary. The **students' council** *(študentski svet)* discusses and gives advice on all matters germane to the rights and obligations of students and can give advice on candidates for Rector and Dean. It adopts and implements the programme of extra-curricular activities for students.

1.5. Inspection and guidance

Pre-school institutions and schools are supervised by the National Inspectorate for Education and Sport, which is part of the Ministry of Education and Sport. Its task is to ensure that the law is complied with and to protect the rights of children and other participants in education. In private pre-school institutions and schools, inspectors supervise only the organisation, funding and implementation of state-approved programmes.

Quality and performance are monitored by the higher education institutions themselves. The law obliges them to jointly establish a **Higher Education Quality Assessment Committee** *(komisija za kvaliteto visokega šolstva)*, which assesses the quality of higher education institutions at national level. The Committee must seek the views of the students before publishing its report.

The guidance and orientation of pupils in pre-school institutions, 'basic', secondary and special education are the responsibility of each school guidance service. The teams or individual guidance experts provide assistance and advice to children, pupils, students and parents. The guidance service also participates in the preparation and implementation of individual programmes for children with special needs. The work of the guidance service is carried out by consultants, such as psychologists, teaching specialists, social workers and specialists on children with special needs. Within the framework of vocational counselling, they liaise with the National Employment Office. The National Employment Office is responsible for vocational guidance in schools and for scholarships. There are also independent counselling centres for children, young persons and parents. Some of the counselling tasks are also undertaken by the **Higher Education Application and Information Office** *(Visokošolska prijavno-informacijska služba)*.

1.6. Financing

Within the education system, the resources for funding public services are provided by the state budget and by the municipal budgets. The state budget covers the following fields in their entirety: higher education institutions and post-secondary vocational colleges, secondary schools and secondary school students' halls of residence, and schools and institutions for children with special needs. It covers salaries and partly covers equipment costs in compulsory education and all the other tasks required to improve quality within the education system. The State co-funds adult education.

Local communities provide a proportion of the resources for elementary school education (investments and maintenance, but also equipment expenses), elementary music education and pre-school education. Elementary music schools and pre-school institutions are also financed from parents' contributions. Parents cover the expenses for part of the course according to their financial possibilities. Local communities provide funding from their own resources (taxes, income taxes, etc.). The economically underdeveloped municipality, which is unable to finance itself from these resources, receives additional finances from the state budget.

The law stipulates in which cases resources can be obtained with contributions from students, apprentices and adults to cover optional and advanced courses. In elementary music schools, pupils pay a fee to cover the cost of materials for the curriculum, and all other expenses are covered by the local community. Furthermore, schools can obtain a state contribution towards all non-compulsory and non-standard services. Everyone unable to pay for reasons of social status is subsidised by the State. In secondary and tertiary education, part-time students pay fees.

The amount of resources allocated to public schools from the state and municipal budgets is determined on the basis of norms and standards issued by the Minister of Education. Councils of experts and representative associations are also involved in the acceptance process. Norms and standards specify the measures to be implemented for the formation of classes and groups, and therefore also the standards and norms for determining the number of employees required and the measurements used to calculate the material expenses of each group.

Resources are provided globally for each pre-school institution or school according to individual agreements (salaries, material expenses, investing maintenance). All the resources paid to an institution are calculated on the basis of precise data supplied by schools and pre-school institutions. Further and direct allocation is carried out within the institution. Measures must be taken to ensure that the resources are used properly and are supervised by the provider of the funding.

The pre-school institutions or school must obtain an agreement from the Minister of Education before recruiting staff. The head teacher determines the individual salary of each employee which is calculated on the basis of the law and a collective agreement.

When using resources for revenue expenditure and for renovation and maintenance of buildings and replacement equipment, every pre-school institution and school must respect rules concerning the accounts, but they are free to decide how they are used. On the basis of priorities defined within these resources, they are bound by regulations issued by the Minister of Education concerning equipment and space.

The state-subsidised schools keep account of funds. Pupils can borrow books provided they pay a certain amount of money.

1.7. Advisory/Consultative/Participatory bodies

There are three councils of experts appointed by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia in accordance with the law to present decisions on technical matters as well as any form of expert assistance required to draw up the legislation:

- **Council of experts of the Republic of Slovenia for General Education**
- **Council of experts of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational and Technical Education**
- **Council of experts of the Republic of Slovenia for Adult Education.**

The task of the councils of experts is to determine the contents of the educational curricula, to approve textbooks and educational materials, and to propose criteria and standards for school equipment. Councils of experts form committees, groups of experts and other working bodies for different areas of their work.

The representatives of employers and employees and of the social partners (chambers, trade unions, the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs) take part in the Council of experts of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational and Technical Education, in the Curriculum Sub-Council for Vocational Education and in Working groups for the nomenclature of occupations (occupational standards), in the Council of experts of the Republic of Slovenia for Adult Education and in the Curriculum Sub-Council for Adult Education.

In 1995, the Ministry of Education and Sport temporarily set up an infrastructure to undertake a complete review of curricula: the **National Curriculum Council** *(Nacionalni kurikularni svet)* and curriculum commissions for the field of pre-school education, 'basic' education, secondary general education, vocational education and training and for adult education. There are also curriculum commissions and working groups (so-called 'teachers' circles') involved in reviewing the curricula of different subjects.

There are a considerable number of advisory bodies set up to frame proposals to the Minister of Education, including the Commission for Teachers' Promotion, the Commission for Grants and Scholarships, the In-service Training Committee, etc. These bodies are appointed by the Minister.

1.8. Private schools

The law introduces various possibilities for the inclusion of private interests in the field of education.

Private schools include all those not founded by the State or municipalities. Within the limits defined by the law, they are free to choose their philosophical and religious persuasion, educational philosophy, methods, organisation of classes and teaching materials. The founder is responsible for fulfilling legal and financial requirements and the requirements concerning the staffing and premises needed for the activities of the private school.

Private schools and pre-school institutions are similar to public schools with regard to teaching, compulsory educational aims and objectives and the level of education they provide. Concessions to private schools to perform public services are granted by the Minister, while concessions to private pre-school institutions are granted by municipalities. Certificates awarded by private schools are recognised by the State. These schools must apply rules similar to those of public schools (the qualifications of the teachers and the curriculum must be confirmed by the National Council of experts). Other private schools and pre-school institutions that are independent of state initiative and interest are permitted to operate on the basis of their own curricula, philosophical beliefs and distinct education principles (Steiner, Montessori, etc.). The qualification requirements for the teachers and the curricula of such schools operating in accordance with special internationally tested educational principles are determined on an individual basis. International references and the requirements applied within each of the educational theories are taken into account.

The National Inspectorate for Education and Sport verifies whether schools are operating in accordance with the law. The supervision of the quality of teaching is carried out by an annual assessment of the knowledge of the graduating students.

The State financially supports private schools with concessions. In order to encourage the establishment of private substitutional schools in the transition period, these schools receive subsidies from public funds of up to 100% of the funding for salaries and direct costs per student in a public school.

Private schools and pre-school institutions which operate according to internationally recognised education principles also involve a certain level of private financial initiative.

Private higher education institutions are those that are not established by the State. According to the Higher Education Act, private faculties, academies of art and higher professional education institutions may be set up as single-institutions of higher education and must be legal entities. Single-institutions of higher education may join a university as affiliated members. The legislation also allows private universities to be established.

2. Pre-school education *(Predšolska vzgoja)*

Pre-school institutions *(vrtci)* are institutions placed under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education and Sport in 1993. Before 1993, pre-school institutions were placed under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs.

Pre-school education (from the age of 1 to the age of 6) is not compulsory in Slovenia. The exception is the one year of pre-school education – the so-called 'pre-school classes' – prior to the child's enrolment in elementary school. This preparatory programme for entering elementary school will be in force until the introduction of the new compulsory education system. 'Basic' education will be extended from 8 to 9 years in such a way that it will start one year earlier (at the age of 6). Henceforth, existing pre-school classes will be included in one single structure of compulsory education.

In the 1970s and 1980s, a common feature of the Slovenian system was the extension of the network of pre-school institutions offering well-organised care for the children of working parents. The statistical data shows that in the entire population the percentage of children in pre-school institutions increased until 1987. In 1980, 38% of children were in pre-school institutions. In 1987, the number rose to 52%. Since that year, the

percentage has remained at about 50%. In 1997, for example, it was 58.6%, which represents a considerable increase compared with the past four years.

The only condition for accepting a child at pre-school level is that the parents must obtain a paediatrician's report on the child's state of health. According to law, priority in the allocation of pre-school places is given to children with special needs and socially handicapped children for whom an official report has been issued by the social work centres.

Pre-school institutions are funded by municipalities and by fees paid by parents, the sale of services and products, donations and other sources. The criteria are defined by the Ministry of Education and are unified for the entire country. The actual amount paid by parents is defined by the municipality in which the parents are resident. The payment is based on the fee to be paid for the course for which a child is enrolled. There are different courses depending on the age of the child. This fee includes the costs of educational activities, supervision and meals. Parents can pay at least 15% and up to 80% of the fee depending on the family income and financial circumstances. The rest of the cost is covered by the municipality through public funds. In recent years, the average parental contribution has been around 25-30% of the cost. Parents with more than one child enrolled in a pre-school institution pay less, and very economically underprivileged parents are not required to pay.

The state budget covers all the costs involved in the pre-school education of children with special needs in special groups in institutions, and development activities in this field.

2.1. The organisation of pre-school institutions

The basic tasks of pre-school institutions are helping parents with the general care of the child, improving the quality of life for the family and children, and creating the conditions for the development of the child's physical and mental abilities. The general educational objective of public pre-school institutions is to encourage different areas of development according to the characteristics of the child's stage of development and his/her individual personality, and to encourage the child to develop special abilities and skills.

Most Slovenian pre-school institutions work in buildings designed and built for this purpose, and include special facilities for care, meals and rest. Children of both sexes spend all day and perform all the indoor activities in the same playroom because there are no special-purpose rooms. The reform of pre-school education requires new spatial and design solutions and a change in standards to improve the quality of the environment. Some pre-school institutions have already built special-purpose rooms.

Pre-school institutions provide day courses generally lasting from 6 to 9 hours, and half-day courses lasting from 4 to 6 hours. The opening hours of pre-school institutions in larger cities is up to 11 hours and they are adjusted to suit the needs of working parents. The pre-school institution is open every weekday throughout the year except Sundays and public holidays. Shorter courses for children from 3 years of age until they reach school age are also organised in areas that are regarded as remote and demographically threatened. Children are mostly divided into homogeneous groups according to age. According to the prevailing regulations, there can be up to 14 children in the age-groups up to 3 years of age, and there can be up to 24 children in the groups from 3 years of age upwards.

The staff regulations state that a pre-school teacher and an assistant must be employed in a pre-school group. They must be present at the same time for at least 6 hours a day in the first age-groups and at least 4 hours a day in the second age groups. Teachers and assistants can change group every year, or the teacher can take the children to the next age-group. This is jointly decided by the pre-school institution and by the parents.

The pre-school institution can organise care for the children in a childminder family. This type of care is provided at home and can be offered by members of the educational staff employed in the pre-school institution or by a private pre-school teacher.

All individuals who provide pre-school care must meet the legal requirements and be registered. The register is kept by the Ministry of Education and Sport.

2.2. Curriculum/Assessment

The 1979 *Educational programme for the education and care of pre-school children* and the 1981 *Educational programme for pre-school classes (6-7 years)* form the main basis for work in pre-school institutions. Work is under way on the preparation of new solutions that should make the content of the curricula more open and up to date. Pre-school teachers are now adding different innovation projects to their work and they therefore go beyond the actual framework of the *Educational programme*.

The 1979 *Educational programme for the education and care of pre-school children* sets out a number of educational areas (physical and health education, intellectual education, music education, art education, rhythmical movement education) within which the contents and specific guidelines for their implementation are defined; directed activities are chronologically defined as well as the sequencing of the activities and tasks.

Methods of work in pre-school institutions differ and are tailored to the educational field and developmental characteristics of the children, but are not specifically defined in the *Educational programme*. The work in pre-school institutions is in the form of target and non-target activities through games. The proportion of target activities increases with the age of the children. The methods are not specially defined in the *Educational programme*.

In addition to the *Educational programme*, pre-school teachers use other technical materials, books and literature for children. In pre-school institutions there are some didactic tools available to the teachers. Different toys in playing corners are available to the children, and there are also different playing tools outside the pre-school institutions. The indoor equipment of pre-school institutions is relatively appropriate, and the furniture and other items are designed to ergonomic standards and give the children independence in their daily routine, playing and learning activities.

2.3. Pre-school teachers

The staff of all pre-school institutions include qualified pre-school teachers and pre-school assistants. Until 1985, pre-school teachers were trained at university colleges (short-type education: 2-year pre-school teacher education and training course plus half-a-year to prepare a thesis). In the wake of the legislative changes in higher education (1993), a new 3-year higher professional education course (plus one year to prepare a thesis) for pre-school teachers was put together, and is now offered in the education faculties at both universities. The 3-year higher professional course combines general academic knowledge, training in the childcare system, communication skills with children and adults, different approaches to understanding childhood and pre-school education (education theory, pre-school teaching, didactics, developmental and pedagogical psychology, sociology, philosophy, special pedagogy and health education), and basic theoretical and practical knowledge in different educational areas such as language, social environment, science, mathematics, movement, dancing, music and artistic creativity.

After the completion of the 10-month training period, pre-school teachers must pass the teaching certification examinations. Only then can pre-school teachers be employed on a full-time basis. They are employed on the basis of employment contracts as defined by the general law on employment contracts and the collective agreement governing the education field. Public-sector pre-school teachers are employed as civil servants (the law on public employees is in preparation), while those recruited in the private sector have the status of company employees.

In-service training (INSET) is a right and obligation for pre-school teachers and teachers at all levels of education. More specifically, it is regulated by a collective agreement. Pre-school teachers can receive at least five days of training a year or 15 days every three years. These training days are counted as working days and are paid as such. Pre-school teachers (both elementary and secondary school teachers) who participate in the INSET programmes are awarded points required to obtain a promotion to one of the three possible titles (mentor, adviser, counsellor) and a salary increase.

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2.4. Statistics

1997/98

	Public	Private state-aided
Children	62 301	361
Children aged 3-6	52 450	311
Pre-school teachers and assistants	6 882	33
Pre-school institutions	784	9

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia.

3. Compulsory education *(Obvezno izobraževanje)*

Compulsory education is referred to as 'basic' education *(osnovnošolsko izobraževanje)*. It lasts 8 years and takes place in elementary schools. According to the law on pre-school institutions, a one-year pre-school class preparing children from 6 to 7 years of age for elementary school is also compulsory.

3.1. Organisation of the school

'Basic' education is provided by elementary schools, elementary schools for children with special needs and institutions for the education and training of children with more severe developmental difficulties. Two of the elementary schools are international, one using English and the other, French. 'Basic' education for adults is organised in special departments of elementary schools, in elementary schools for adults and in 'people's' high schools *(ljudske univerze)*.

The general objective of elementary schools is to provide pupils with basic knowledge and preparation for further schooling and for their professional and private life. Elementary school gives pupils an understanding of the basic laws of nature, society and man, and develops their linguistic culture and curiosity, as well as responding to a need for ongoing education, good relationships, interests and abilities.

To enter the first year of the course, children must be six-and-a-half years old before the start of the school year. A child can start school at the age of 6 if he/she is judged to be ready enough. The level of readiness required to start school is defined by a special school committee. The school committee includes the pre-school teacher who has taught the pre-school classes (i.e. the teacher who has been preparing the child for elementary school), the school doctor and the school psychologist. The criteria used to determine the child's readiness are his/her psychological and physical development throughout the entire pre-school period (from 1 to 6 years of age), his/her living conditions and the circumstances determining his/her success in 'basic' education.

The compulsory course is free of charge for children and young persons. So far, no fees have been introduced. However, pupils have to pay their share for the textbooks and learning materials they use, and for their meals. Their transport costs are refunded by the local community.

Elementary schools differ in size from one municipality to another and according to status: there were 821 elementary schools in the 1997/98 academic year, of which 208 were split-site main campus, 375 split-site off-campus and 238 single-site. Elementary schools have on average 12 classes per school, and on average there were 20 pupils of both sexes to a class. Smaller schools and split-site off-campus schools have on average 3 classes with an average of 15 pupils per class. Shift classes are only organised in 4% of the classes. In the classes of schools for children with special needs there are on average 7 pupils to a class.

'Basic' education is divided into two education cycles each lasting four years: the first stage from class 1 to class 4, and the second stage from class 5 to class 8.

In the first four classes, one teacher is generally responsible for the whole educational input (the class teacher), whereas in higher classes there are different teachers who specialise in one or two subjects. In the fifth class, class teachers may also teach some of the subjects (human and natural sciences). Specialists may also teach some of the subjects at the first stage, such as physical education, drawing, music and languages in the ethnically mixed areas, as well as foreign languages for young learners. The situation is different from one school to another, and depends on school human resources.

The school year starts on 1 September and ends on 31 August. Summer holidays last 8 to 9 weeks in July and August. In Slovenia, there are also autumn, Christmas-New Year, winter and May Day holidays, with three additional days off at the most. Pupils attend school from Monday to Friday. The number of compulsory weekly lessons is increased in higher classes (from 20.5 lessons a week in the 1st grade to 29 lessons a week in the 8th grade[1]). A lesson lasts 45 minutes. A school year comprises 38 weeks with classes and other activities. The classes are held in the morning and usually start at 8 a.m. After the classes, the children can have lunch at school. After school, care is also organised for children from the 1st to the 4th class. All other activities, such as optional or supplementary classes and leisure activities, are usually organised after school.

3.2. Curriculum

The present curriculum is based on the curriculum document *The programme of life and work of the elementary school* (1984 with additions until 1997), which includes guidelines for work, the syllabus and the curricula for the subjects. Elementary schools organise the core curriculum and the extra-curricular activities and optional classes. The syllabus is defined at national level and, in addition to classes, includes daily activities, supplementary classes, optional classes and other educational activities.

The classes are arranged according to the subject curricula which are topic-oriented and documented (daily notes, teacher's preparation). The curricula are being revised and will be process-oriented. As regards the core syllabuses, all pupils are taught the same subjects at the same level. Extra-curricular activities are carried out throughout the school year, or in the form of short courses, in the following areas: foreign languages, research, culture and arts, sports, health care, human sciences and technologies. The school gives every pupil the chance to select two activities. The school organises supplementary classes for the pupils of all classes who are either weaker (remedial classes) at that particular time or in general. Pupils can attend classes in a subject of their choice for generally one hour per week. At second stage, the school organises additional classes for talented pupils where they can get wider and deeper knowledge of the subject. They also prepare for different competitions between schools at regional and national level.

Since the syllabus is unified in the present 8-year compulsory education system, there is no division into orientation and transition periods. While the syllabuses determine in detail the curriculum content, the teaching methods are at the professional discretion of the teachers. There is a variety of teaching material on the market that schools buy regularly and that teachers use in class. Teachers choose the textbooks they will use in the following school year from a list approved by the governing body, the Council of experts of the Republic of Slovenia for General Education. The school then informs the parents and pupils of their choice.

The school has formal and informal links with the local community. The school council is tripartite: in addition to the representatives of the teachers and parents, it includes representatives of the local community (municipality), so that the information transfer between the school and the municipality is a two-way process. More well-off municipalities often fund additional school activities. The school also has links with local industry and institutions.

3.3. Assessment

Pupils are assessed in all subjects (descriptive and numerical assessment) continuously on the basis of oral questions, written, artistic, technical, practical and project work and performance. At the end of the school year, overall achievement is defined according to the marks obtained in individual subjects. A pupil's overall achievement can be 'excellent', 'very good', 'good', 'satisfactory' or 'unsatisfactory'.

1 Compulsory classes, one extra-curricular activity and home class are included.

During the school year, the marks are used for diagnostic purposes. The teacher is responsible for assessment. If a pupil does not agree with the mark, there are some complaint procedures. Also, the school staff or an external party is involved if a complaint is lodged concerning the final mark given at the end of the school year.

Over the last few years, descriptive assessment has been used in many schools throughout the State in the first two or three classes.

Pupils usually advance to a higher class. If they fail in a subject, they can either go on to the next class on the basis of the overall satisfactory achievement mark (but not if they fail the same subject two years' running) or repeat the year if they fail on the basis of overall achievement. This is decided by the teachers' assembly. Pupils can also repeat the grade at their parents' request subject to the approval of the teachers' assembly. At the end of the 8th class (i.e. 8 years of compulsory schooling), pupils also receive a special document that certifies that they have completed compulsory education and gives the marks and overall achievement marks obtained in the final year.

At the end of elementary school, the marks are used as the selection criteria by (upper) secondary schools with limited admissions. The marks are then also used as the criteria for obtaining a grant.

The results of assessments are passed on throughout the school and are taken into account when the pupil reaches the final year. On leaving school, at the end of the 8th grade, there is a common external assessment (i.e. all the pupils take the test at the same time) of knowledge in the mother tongue and mathematics which is not compulsory. The result of the test is one of the selection criteria used by secondary schools that have limited admissions. At the end of the 1997/98 academic year, 84% of the pupils took this test. As a selection criterion, only 25% pupils needed the results since there were not too many schools with limited admissions.

A special educator is appointed for guidance at school level who coordinates different activities of this kind which are part and parcel of the school's annual curriculum. They work in cooperation with external institutions, such as the national and regional employment offices, different types of secondary schools, local industry and others. The most common activities include visiting institutions, inviting external experts to school, organising an 'info corner' with all the latest information (each school has its own library with publications on syllabuses, curricula, tenders, typical job descriptions, etc.), informative discussions in the class, topic-oriented parents' meetings, individual discussions, counselling and the 'information day' visit (all secondary and tertiary education institutions have an open day held at the same time).

Children with special needs enrol for special curricula provided by elementary schools specialised to accommodate them.

In the field of basic music and dance education, pupils can attend music schools that teach all orchestral and other classical instruments, solo singing, classical ballet and expressive dance. The music curriculum caters for children from 5 years of age upwards. There are 53 public music schools in Slovenia, and 9% of elementary school pupils attend music schools in the afternoon. The music schools are involved in the European Union of music schools (EMU) and in European music competitions for youth (EMCY).

3.4. Teachers

Until the mid-1980s, the initial education of elementary school teachers was organised in short-type courses: a two-year teacher education and training course plus half a year preparing a thesis at university teacher training colleges and, in some cases also, in four-year university courses at the faculty of sport, Music Academy, faculty of arts and in similar courses. Since 1987, initial education and training for elementary school teachers (see section 2.3) has been provided only in the university courses lasting 4 years plus a thesis year. The courses usually comprise a general part (theory of education, psychology, foreign languages, etc.), a special didactic part and a vocational part (knowledge for teaching at class level, or generally two disciplines for teaching at subject level). The courses also include 3 weeks of practical work in schools. Upon completion of the course, the students are awarded the title of *'teacher of one or two subjects'* or *'class teacher'*. Upon completion of the 10-month training period, pre-school teachers must pass the teaching certification examinations. Pre-school teachers can only then be employed on a full-time basis. They are employed on the basis of employment contracts as defined by the general law on employment relations and the collective agreement governing the educational field.

The majority of elementary school teachers have full-time posts on a permanent basis. The general law on employment relations and the collective agreement for the field of education defines their terms of employment. In future, teachers in the public sector will have public employee status (the law on public employees is in preparation).

In-service training (INSET) is a right and obligation for teachers at all levels of education. More specifically, it is regulated by a collective agreement. Teachers can receive at least five days of training a year or fifteen days every three years. These training days are counted as working days and are paid as such. All teachers who participate in the INSET programmes are awarded points required to obtain a promotion to one of the three possible titles (mentor, adviser, counsellor) and a salary increase.

3.5. Statistics

1997/98

	Public	Private state-aided
Pupils	195 338	171
Teachers*	15 517	26
Schools** of which	820	1
– split-site main campus	207	a
– split-site off-campus	375	a
– single-site schools	238	1

* Teachers (and guidance assistants, librarians, etc.)
** Schools for adults are excluded.
Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia.

4. Post-compulsory secondary education *(Srednješolsko izobraževanje)*

The old system of so-called *career-oriented education* began to be replaced in 1989. The *gymnasium* curriculum was reintroduced in 1989 by a decision of the National Council for Education. In 1995, the *matura* examination was adopted as the general admission condition for higher education. The introduction of the *matura* examination also affected the development of technical schools. They also started preparing their pupils for the *matura* even though most pupils (two-thirds) decided to follow the alternative way of completing their secondary school education, i.e. the final examination. In the *matura* classes in these schools, general academic subjects have taken on more importance than technical subjects.

In 1996, two laws concerning the *gymnasium*, vocational and technical education were passed within the framework of a general reform of the school system. Some innovations are already being introduced in part and some are to be introduced in schools in the coming years. Vocational and technical schools differ in their curricular content, length of education, entrance conditions and possibilities for further studies at a higher level. A new vocational course has been introduced that enables pupils who have finished the *gymnasium* to get into vocational education, i.e. to obtain a vocational qualification and follow a vocational career. The curriculum of the classical *gymnasium*[2] and four curricula of the technical *gymnasium* (music, electrotechnics, mechanical engineering and economics) were introduced to the curriculum of the *gymnasium* and private (catholic) *gymnasium*.

Secondary education in Slovenia caters for young people from 15 to 18-19 years of age and is free of charge. Adults can also follow specially adapted secondary school curricula and pay a fee. After finishing the compulsory 8-year 'basic' education course, the pupils can enter any of the secondary education courses,

2 Type of school with emphasis on classics and humanities.

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which last from 2 to 5 years and lead either directly to the labour market or to post-secondary vocational or higher professional courses, or to university.

The transition from elementary to secondary school is regulated at national level according to the following phases: a general public offer to enrol in secondary schools; the 'information day'; application to the secondary school; a general announcement of the number of candidates according to the available places; non-compulsory group assessment at the end of the 8th class of the elementary school; and then the final phase — admission to schools (with the 1st, 2nd and 3rd choice of school), which is organised at national level. After this procedure (during the holidays) and after the holidays, it is possible to enrol in schools that have any places left.

In the case of limited admission, the following form the selection criteria: the overall achievement and grades in the mother tongue, mathematics and the foreign language (from 5th to 8th class) and the achievements in the group assessment of the mother tongue and mathematics. Schools also have additional assessments based on specific skills.

In 1997/98, secondary schools offered the following curricula:

- **General education:** 4 years (general education curriculum of the *gymnasium*; classical *gymnasium*; technical *gymnasium*; International Baccalaureate)
- **Technical education:** 4-year curriculum from different areas and 5-year curriculum of the Trade Academy; the education curricula in the upgrading system (3 years + 2 years); differential programmes to bridge the gap between 3-year and 4-year curricula; advanced technical education courses for adults.
- **Lower and middle vocational education:** 2-year and 3-year curriculum; 3-year vocational curriculum for the dual system (See Chapter 5).
- **Post-secondary non-tertiary vocational courses:** from 6 months to a 1-year curriculum (see section 5).

Secondary school courses can be adapted for adults and pupils with special needs.

Secondary schools *(srednje šole)* and some 'people's' high schools *(ljudske univerze)* offer secondary education courses. In the past, schools did not differ according to the type of the curricula they offered. It is only in the last few years since the introduction of new legislation that they have been organised into different types of schools, such as *gymnasium (gimnazija)*, technical school *(srednja tehniška šola, srednja strokovna šola)*, technical/vocational school *(srednja poklicno-tehniška šola)*, middle vocational school *(srednja poklicna šola)* and lower vocational school *(nižja poklicna šola)*.

4.1. Organisation of the school

All secondary schools admit pupils of both sexes. In the 1997/98 academic year, students were enrolled in the different types of secondary courses according to the following percentages: 32% in vocational courses, 43% in technical courses, and 25% in *gymnasium* courses. The proportion of students in general secondary education is approximately 40%, since those in technical courses can choose the *matura* classes and end their secondary school education with the *matura*. On average, there are 26 students in secondary school classes. Almost all secondary schools have also partial or full second class shift.

The duration and organisation of work is the same in all schools. The school year starts on 1 September and ends on 31 August of the following year. The holidays are in July and August and last 8 to 9 weeks. There are also autumn, Christmas-New Year and winter holidays and holidays on May Day. Classes for students in general education courses last 38 weeks in the school year and 36 weeks for pupils in their final year. Students in vocational courses have classes 42 weeks a year. The students attend school from Monday to Friday. The classes usually start at 8 a.m. and end at 2 p.m. Lessons last 45 minutes. The schools are obliged to organise at least one meal a day for students. Arrangements are made for extra-curricular activities and optional classes in the afternoon. The schools provide special courses for adults in the evenings and at weekends. Students of both sexes are grouped homogeneously. Science and technical and practical subjects are taught in special classrooms.

The work methods are left to the teacher's professional discretion. As regards the syllabi and subject curricula, the teachers are encouraged to use methods and forms of work that help pupils to work independently.

4.2. Curriculum

4.2.1. General education

General education spans 4 years and prepares students for higher education (in most cases university studies).

The *gymnasium* offers the most general curriculum. 4 800 hours of academic work make up 80% of the 4-year compulsory subjects (mother tongue and Slovene literature, mathematics, the first and second foreign languages, history, geography and physical education) and other compulsory subjects (biology with ecology, chemistry, physics, art, psychology, sociology, philosophy and information technology). Depending on its possibilities, the school offers pupils in the 3rd and 4th class 14% of the hours for their choice of course connected with preparation for the *matura* (science, linguistic part to be chosen) or optional sports part (in the *gymnasium* with sportsmen). They differ from compulsory classes in method of work and content (workshops, courses, outings, social work, research camps, work practice, etc.).

The proportions of the different parts of the syllabus vary in the different classes so that the syllabus is almost entirely fixed in the first class (only one non-fixed hour out of 32 in the week). The number of non-fixed hours increases for pupils in the fourth class (two-thirds of the syllabus is fixed, while one-third is determined according to their interests i.e. chosen *matura* subjects).

The International Baccalaureate is a 2-year course that provides intensive preparation for the International Baccalaureate (International Baccalaureate Organisation - IBO). Applicants must be 16 to 17 years of age and have completed the second year of secondary school (4-year course) with above-average achievement.

4.2.2. Technical education

Two basic aims are built into the curricula of technical education: preparation for higher vocational studies and basic knowledge to enter the labour market and start work in industry, trade or service activities. Specific knowledge and practical experience are provided through a 'probation' period after the pupils leave school.

The courses can last 4 or 5 years (Trade Academy). They enable pupils to choose between the *matura* and the final examination. There can also be 2-year further technical courses for those who have completed 3-year middle vocational courses. An equal educational standard in comparison with 4-year technical courses is provided by the content and quantity of general and technical subjects, and by the content of the final examination. The *matura* is not designed for such 2-year technical education courses. These courses provide more detailed and wide-ranging vocational knowledge than the previous 3-year middle vocational course and are mostly designed for adults.

The amount of science and social science subjects is determined by the vocational orientation of the course and, in the case of 4-year technical courses with *matura* classes, by the *matura* requirements. The 4-year technical education courses comprise 4 800 hours of classes and the 5-year course at the Trade Academy 6 000 hours of classes. The students must decide at the end of the second year whether to prepare for the final examination or for the *matura*. For students preparing for the *matura*, the syllabus comprises 67% of general academic subjects (mother tongue and Slovene literature, foreign languages, mathematics, science and social science), 27% of technical subjects and 6% of practical training. For students preparing for the final examination, the course includes 62% of general academic subjects, 30% of technical subjects and 8% of practical training. A second or third foreign language is provided for the courses in catering, tourism, economics, business, administration and trade. The final examination is taken in the school. The common part of the final examination comprises examinations in the mother tongue and Slovene literature, and pupils can choose either mathematics or a foreign language. A special part of the final examination comprises a test on technical knowledge, seminar work, a product or a project with an oral explanation.

4.3. Assessment/Qualifications

The school year is divided into three assessment periods. The subjects are assessed by the teachers. In each assessment period, the grades are usually oral and written and are numerical. The assessment scale is from 1 to 5, where 1 means that the pupil did not show the satisfactory level of knowledge. At the end of the school year, an overall achievement grade is awarded depending on all grades in individual subjects. Pupils go on to

the next class if they have passed all the subjects and have met all the other conditions set by the curriculum. At the end of the school year, pupils can retake the exams in a maximum of three subjects they failed.

Secondary education ends either with the final examination or the *matura*. The final examination is internal and is usually chosen by pupils who decide to go on to vocational work or to study at an appropriate higher or high school. The final examination includes the subjects set by the curriculum.

Overall responsibility for the *matura* and for the rules and procedures of administration lies with the National Matura Commission, which is made up of representatives from the two universities, the Secondary School Association, the Ministry of Education and Sport, the Council of experts of the Republic of Slovenia for General Education, the Slovenian Academy of Science and Arts and the National Subject Commissions. The examination papers and marking schemes are set by the National Subject Commissions, which are also responsible for marking the students' scripts. The National Examination Centre is responsible for printing and distributing papers and for collecting and analysing results data. Furthermore, it plays a central role in supporting the subject commissions and controlling the quality of question papers.

The degree of complexity of the content and the organisation of the *matura* is the same for the *gymnasium* curriculum and all technical curricula. The *matura* is an external examination in five subjects required for university. There are both compulsory subjects and optional subjects. The compulsory subjects are the mother tongue, mathematics and a foreign language. All other subjects that are a part of the compulsory *gymnasium* syllabus are optional. Pupils have to choose two subjects. After completing the vocational curriculum, pupils receive a certificate of achievement, which is a public document.

Pupils are awarded a *matura* certificate after completing the general curriculum and the *matura* examination. After completing the technical curriculum, they receive a final examination certificate with the title of the course and the qualification they have obtained. After completing the technical curriculum, the qualification of technician is obtained (the qualification specifies the relevant occupation or range of occupations).

4.4. Teachers

The initial education of secondary school teachers is provided by 4-year university courses (students must complete a 4-year university course plus one year for the preparation of a thesis; the course therefore lasts 5 years). Courses for teachers of general academic subjects generally include two disciplines in parallel within a course (with the exception of science teachers in 4-year secondary schools who have to complete a one-discipline course). In addition to one or two disciplinary fields, the intending teachers acquire pedagogical, psychological and special didactic knowledge. Graduates are awarded a certificate and the title of 'Teacher of one or two subjects'.

...itial training is not organised as an extra for teachers of technical/theoretical and vocational/practical subjects. After completing higher education (non-teacher) studies and a minimum of 3 years of work experience, intending secondary teachers must follow a special credential course for teaching in secondary school. This is also another way for unqualified teachers to enter the teaching profession. If other professionals wish to become secondary teachers and teach not only technical subjects but also general subjects at general and technical or vocational schools, they can obtain the teaching qualification by passing a special credential course.

The new law of 1996 stipulates that all teachers must undergo a compulsory probation period lasting from 6 to 10 months. Upon completion of the probation period, pre-school teachers must pass the teaching certificate examinations, which is the condition for permanent employment. Secondary school teachers are mostly employed on a full-time and permanent basis.

In-service training (INSET) is arranged in the same way for pre-school, elementary and secondary school education.

4.5. Statistics

1997/98

	Public	Public and private	Private
Students* of whom	106 112	107 362	1 250
– in general education		26 724	
– in technical/general education		45 813	
– in vocational education		34 825	
Teachers**	8 676	8 798	122
Schools	148	153	5

* Students in general, technical/general and vocational education. Adult students are excluded.
** All teachers are included (full-time and part-time).
Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, Upper secondary education in Slovenia at the end of the 1997/98 academic year.

5. Vocational education and initial training *(Poklicno in strokovno izobraževanje in usposabljanje)*

The legislative basis for providing vocational training is defined in labour and social legislation, in educational legislation, in agreements with social partners and in collective agreements, and for certain matters (especially the academic requirements for the labour market) also in the legislation that defines the conditions for certain business, service and administrative activities. The educational legislation deals with the conditions for implementing educational work, while the labour and social legislation, social agreements and collective agreements deal primarily with employers' and employees' rights and obligations with regard to education and training as well as with active employment policy.

The vertical component of vocational education and initial training has not yet been completed with the 1996 reform. In 1997/98 it comprised programmes of **lower vocational education** (2-year programmes), **middle vocational education** (3-year programmes), **technical education** (4-year programmes; see Chapter 4), **vocational-technical education** (3+2-year and differential programmes; see Chapter 4), **post-secondary non-tertiary vocational courses** (up to 1 year) and **post-secondary education** (2-year post-secondary vocational colleges).

5.1. Lower and middle vocational education *(Nižje in srednje poklicno izobraževanje)*

5.1.1. Organisation

Two-year lower vocational education courses and three-year vocational education courses provide opportunities for the individual application of knowledge in various technological fields and increase work skills for employment and on-the-job training. Two-year courses provide education for less demanding occupations. For those who have finished successfully only[3] 6 years of elementary school, they also provide knowledge at the level of the 7th and 8th year of elementary school. Three-year courses provide education for more demanding occupations covering a wide range of jobs in industry, trade and services.

3 Pupils who have not finished successfully all 8 years of compulsory 'basic' education, have access to secondary education too; they may enter the 2-year lower vocational school if they have finished successfully at least 6 grades of elementary school.

5.1.2. Curriculum

The work of the curricular review for vocational education is supported and assisted by the Centre for Vocational Education and training and the Slovenian Centre for Adult Education.

The general part of the 2-year vocational school course comprises compulsory subjects and optional subjects (75% of all 2 368 hours of the syllabus). They are Slovene language and literature, art, science and social sciences. In this way, pupils are given general knowledge and the knowledge from the 7th and 8th class of elementary school. At the same time, they are taught the basics required for vocational knowledge and for possible retraining. Practical training takes up 40% of the syllabus. Upon successful completion of the courses, pupils can enter any 3-year vocational or 4-year technical secondary school course.

The general subjects studied in 3-year courses are the mother tongue and Slovene literature, art, mathematics, social science and physical education. The general knowledge course allows pupils to practise and slightly upgrade elementary school knowledge and takes up one third of the syllabus, while the rest of the time is allocated as follows: 34% for practical training and 32% for technical/theoretical subjects. In most 3-year courses, the choice of subjects is also fixed and may include a foreign language, science, information technology or technical subjects. After completing 3-year vocational education, pupils can continue their education to technician level through 2-year special courses.

A dual system (apprenticeship) has been introduced into vocational schools that provide three-year vocational courses. It replaces the former 'craft' courses, and entails apprenticeship contracts between apprentices, parents and employer, special working relations, shared responsibility (the training part for the school and the practical part for the employer), 6 months of recognised work and no probation period after completing a course. The ratio of theoretical knowledge (provided by schools) to practical training (provided by trainers in companies) is 2:3. The first 16 pilot schools with 9 vocational courses started introducing the dual system in the 1997/98 academic year, and 524 apprenticeship contracts were registered.

5.1.3. Assessment

In both cases (dual system and school-based course), 3-year vocational education, like the 2-year course, ends with a final examination consisting of a theoretical part and a practical part.

5.1.4. Teachers

Teachers in public vocational and technical schools are teachers of general and special theoretical subjects, instructors of practical training and skills, or master craftsmen (offering practical training to apprentices).

The same qualification requirements, status and INSET obligations for teachers of general and special theoretical subjects apply as in general education (see section 4.4). Instructors of practical training must possess at least a secondary school degree in the appropriate field, three-year work experience and pedagogical qualifications. Master craftsmen must have passed a master craftsman's certification examination.

5.2. Post secondary non-tertiary vocational courses *(Poklicni tečaji)*

A transition possibility from general education to vocational education is available in the form of post-secondary non-tertiary vocational courses. These courses are designed for graduates of *gymnasia* who wish to enter the labour market or continue education at the higher vocational level. They take six months to one year, and end with a final exam. Students get a technical/vocational qualification. The implementation of these courses started on a pilot basis in 1996/97.

Another innovation in the VET system are **master craft, foremen and managerial** preparatory courses and examinations.

5.3. Post-secondary vocational education (Višje strokovno izobraževanje)

Vocational colleges *(višje strokovne šole)*

5.2.1. Organisation

Post-secondary vocational education was introduced by the new law on vocational and technical education (1996). The introduction of post-secondary vocational colleges is being organised with the help of the EU PHARE Programme. In the 1996/97 academic year, the first 5 higher vocational colleges were set up by the State in cooperation with the municipality, and one was set up by a commercial firm. They offer 2-year post-secondary vocational courses that are designed as a particular form of tertiary education, but are markedly practical in content and distinct from higher education (and from university studies and higher vocational studies). In these courses, practical training accounts for around 40% of the curriculum and is completed within companies.

The entrance requirement for post-secondary vocational colleges is completion of an appropriate 4-year secondary technical school or *gymnasium* course. It is also possible to enrol in a post-secondary vocational college after completing an appropriate 3-year secondary vocational school course, three years of working practice and additional (entrance) exams (in the mother tongue and mathematics or a foreign language). In the event of limited admissions due to too many applications, the candidates are selected on the basis of their achievement in practical education, i.e. practice-oriented subjects in secondary school.

The school year lasts from 1 September to 31 August. It is divided into two semesters, together lasting no more then 42 weeks. The weekly obligation of a high school student is 25 hours of lectures, exercises and seminars. All forms of academic work can last up to 35 hours per week. Practical education is either spread over the year or condensed at the end of each year.

5.2.2. Assessment

The students are assessed in examinations (partial examinations), seminars and exercises. Students must submit a report of practical work. The assessment scale is from 1 to 10 where 10 is the top mark and 6 is the lowest pass mark. The diploma examination consists of diploma work and an oral presentation. Once all the course obligations have been completed, students are awarded a diploma with the title of the course. Those who successfully complete higher vocational college can be employed to carry out assignments with a medium level of responsibility within specific fields of work.

5.2.3. Teachers

Teachers of vocational colleges are vocational college lecturers. They must possess at least an undergraduate university degree, pedagogical qualifications, three years of appropriate work experience and outstanding achievements in their professional field. The general conditions for INSET, promotion and the status of teachers also apply to the vocational college lecturers (see section 4.4).

The title of 'vocational college lecturer' *(predavatelj višje šole)* is awarded by the faculties *(predavateljski zbor)* of the respective vocational colleges. If it is not yet constituted, it is awarded by the Council of experts of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational and Technical Education. The procedure for the award of titles is determined by the minister.

5.2.4. Statistics

1997/98

Academic year	1997/98	
Post-secondary vocational colleges	Public	Private
Number of colleges	4	1
Number of students*	717	147
Number of teachers (in FTE)	42	5

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia
* Full-time and part-time students are included

6. Higher education

The legal basis for the existing higher education system is set out in the Constitution, which recognises the right of universities and other higher education institutions to act autonomously within the limits set by the law (Higher Education Act, 1993). Higher education is provided in Slovenia at:

- **state universities** *(državne univerze)* which are divided into **faculties** *(fakultete)*, **art academies** *(umetniške akademije)* **and higher professional institutions** *(visoke strokovne šole)*;
- **single higher education institutions**[4]:
  state higher professional institutions can also be organised outside the universities;
- **private** faculties and higher professional institutions; according to the law it is also possible to establish private universities and single-art academies.

There has been a greater flow from secondary to higher education in recent years, and as a result the number of students and graduates has increased along with the number of students in part-time and postgraduate courses. New single-higher education institutions are being set up.

The responsibility for securing minimum standards (ex-ante control) in higher education lies with the Council for Higher education of the Republic of Slovenia, which is a consultative body of the Government and consists of the representatives of universities and single higher education institutions and of other experts. It is authorised to accredit new higher education institutions, to evaluate new study programmes of universities and to issue opinions on them, to accredit state-approved programmes of single higher education institutions. University study and research programmes are approved by the senates of university member institutions upon previous consent of the university senate.

The Council of Higher Education forms commissions and independent groups of experts for individual fields of its activities. Among them there is the Teacher Education and Training Commission.

The Higher Education Quality Assessment Commission (HEQAC) is to monitor and assess the quality and effectiveness of teaching, research, art and professional activities of higher education institutions and reports once a year to the senates of higher education institutions, the Council for Higher Education and to the **Council for Research and Technology of the Republic of Slovenia** *(Svet za znanost in tehnologijo Republike Slovenije)*. The HEQAC is composed of representatives of all scientific and art disciplines and professional fields, and also obtains the advice of students.

In 1998, there were 2 universities (the University of Ljubljana, which consists of 20 faculties, 3 higher professional education institutions and 3 art academies, and the University of Maribor, which consists of 9 faculties, and 1 higher professional education institution) and [illegible] higher education institutions, of which 7 are private (2 faculties and 5 higher professional education institutions). The Higher Professional School of Police and Security Studies is affiliated to the University of Ljubljana. It is a state-founded higher education

4 Higher education institution which is not a member of a university.

institution financed by the Ministry of the Interior. The two new private institutions have already been set up and plan to start work in the 1998/99 academic year.

Higher education has a twin-track structure, with academically-oriented university studies and higher professional studies. Universities (and single faculties established as private institutions) may offer through their members both types of courses, while higher professional education institutions offer only professional courses. The courses are organised at two levels: at undergraduate level students receive a diploma leading to a first university degree or a first professional degree, while at graduate level students receive either the second professional degree of *specializacija* or the academic degree of *magisterij* or *doktorat*.

Institutions of higher education carry out basic and applied research, development and other projects in compliance with the Act regulating research.

6.1. Admission requirements

Applicants must have completed the *matura* to be accepted for a university course. In addition to the candidates who have completed the *matura*, those who have completed the final examination after an appropriate 4-year technical course can enrol for the higher professional course. The entrance requirement for some university or higher professional courses can also consist in a test of certain skills, such as art and music talent and psychophysical abilities. The entrance requirements for postgraduate studies are defined in the curriculum. In most cases, the most important criterion is the average grade in the graduate period. Participation in research work and work experience may also be required. Higher education institutions define their own admission requirements in compliance with a law in each study programme separately.

The basic rules concerning the application procedure are defined by the minister. The procedure itself begins with the pre-enrolment announcement of the number of places available for new applicants. It is usually published in February. It includes basic information on courses, the number of places available, the entrance requirements and the application procedures and deadlines. The announcement is adopted by the university or single higher education institution with the consent of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia. There are two application terms, spring and autumn. In the spring term, candidates send their application to the central higher education application information service. The application includes up to three courses in which candidates would like to enrol. They are admitted to the first course for which they meet the requirements. In case of limited admissions, their overall achievement at secondary school and in the *matura* or final examination is taken into account. If any specific skills are required for a particular course, their achievement in tests of these skills is taken into account. The candidates who do not pass in spring try for the available places in the autumn term. The applications are no longer sent to the central admission service but to individual higher education institutions. The same requirements are applied as in the spring term.

The available places in postgraduate courses are also announced, and the universities and single higher education institutions handle the application procedure.

6.2. Finance resources in higher education

In the higher education field, the State is responsible for the allocation of resources needed to carry out the Higher Education Master Plan. It defines the criteria for carrying out higher education activities and determines the framework budget for their implementation. Job classifications are determined by university rectors in consultation with the Minister of Education. Vacancies are advertised in accordance with the constitution of the higher education institution. Qualification requirements and the selection of applicants are determined by higher education institutions according to the law. The State provides funds for salaries, direct costs and a proportion of the maintenance costs for buildings and equipment; this is based on criteria taking into account the type and scope of higher education curricula and the number of students and graduates. Higher education institutions must comply with the legislation in force when spending budgetary funds. In the case of non-state sources, they can allocate resources on the basis of their own priorities. The State helps fund the activities of certain private professional institutions of higher education on the basis of a 'concession agreement'. Public higher education institutions manage the property used by them for their activities. On the basis of priorities, the State provides the major part of resources for investments in new premises and equipment and their maintenance. It also takes care of the construction of student housing and subsidises the meals and accommodation of students in residence halls. It manages the higher education infrastructure and the extra-curricular activities of students.

There are no fees for graduate courses in public institutions or private institutions with a concession. Full-time students in other private higher education institutions, part-time students and postgraduate students pay a fee according to the regulations on fees issued by the Minister. The amount to be paid is defined by the competent bodies of higher education institutions, at which the Minister's regulations on those costs that can be included in the fee, and how they are to be calculated, have to be taken into account. Higher education institutions can charge certain fees also for regular courses if they offer supplementary services.

The State can also pay certain social benefits for unemployed students. In the case of part-time students, either they pay a fee on their own or it is paid by their employers. If the part-time course is co-financed by public funds — as in the case of part-time courses for teachers — the fee is correspondingly lower.

6.3. The academic year

The academic year lasts from 1 October to 30 September and is usually divided into two semesters. Organised courses (lectures, seminars and exercises) usually last from 20 to 30 hours a week, 30 weeks annually. The details on the organisation and schedule of the courses are defined by the statutes of higher education institutions and academic calendars. The details may be tailored to the needs of part-time students. Lectures can in some cases be arranged at art academies.

6.4. Courses

The courses of study offered by institutions of higher education are degree courses leading to diplomas. In Slovenia, there are 143 undergraduate degree courses for university education and 53 undergraduate courses for higher vocational education, 56 graduate courses leading to a specialist degree and 121 graduate courses leading to a *Magister* and/or *Doktor* degree. Students who meet all the requirements of a degree course are awarded a diploma.

There are also credential courses which improve, deepen or broaden the student's knowledge of a specific field covered by a degree course. Students who meet all the requirements of a credential programme are awarded a certificate.

Higher professional courses leading to the degree of a higher professional education institution usually last 3 years (exceptionally 4 years). After the completion of the professional undergraduate course, a student can obtain the professional title of *graduate (diplomirani)* or *graduate engineer (diplomirani inženir)*, for which the abbreviations *dipl.* or *dipl. inž.* are used.

University undergraduate courses leading to a university degree last from 4 to 6 years. The majority last 4 years, veterinary medicine and theology 5 years, and medicine and dentistry 6 years. After the completion of the university undergraduate course, it is possible to obtain the professional title of *graduate (diplomirani)* with the name of the profession, *graduate engineer (diplomirani inženir)* in a technical profession with the name of the profession, *teacher* of the subject field with the name of the profession *(profesor ...)*, or in the artistic field also *academic ...* (for example *painter, musician*) *(akademski ... slikar, glasbenik)*. Titles awarded after the completion of the university undergraduate course in compliance with the new Professional and Academic Titles Act (1998) will be formed by adding the words *univerzitetni diplomirani* (abb.: *univ. dipl.*), or *univerzitetni diplomirani inženir* (abb.: *univ. dipl. inž.*).

Graduate courses lead to a specialist degree (1 to 2 years), to a *Magister* degree (2 years) or to a doctoral degree (4 years). Students enrolled in a *Magister* degree course can complete a doctoral course, and students enrolled in a doctoral course can complete a *Magister* course.

Students who have completed all courses required for graduation are in principle allowed to maintain their student status for another year (exceptionally more), during which they can take the examinations, fulfil other requirements (practical work) and write a diploma paper (thesis).

6.5. Assessment

The study obligations are defined by the course. The assessment scale, examination conditions and examination rules are determined by the statutes of the university or single higher education institution. The

details are defined in the examination regulations of individual faculties, art academies and higher vocational institutions. The assessment scale has 10 levels, 10 being the top mark and 6 the lowest pass mark. Students can take an examination in the same subject three times in the same academic year. Examinations are conducted during the various terms and usually in three sessions: June-July, September and January-February. If a student has failed an examination three times running, he/she must take the examination before a three-member examination committee. Other course requirements include seminar papers, colloquia and the student's defence of his/her degree thesis.

6.6. Teachers

Research, art and teaching activities are performed mainly at higher education faculties by assistants, assistant professors, associate professors and full professors. Faculty assistants are assistants, lectors, expert advisers, senior advisers, junior experts and instructors. At higher professional institutions, the teaching is carried out also by lecturers and senior lecturers. Research faculty members are researchers, senior researchers and research advisers. They carry out research programmes.

A teaching and research faculty title may be awarded to a holder of a *doktor znanosti* (Doctor of science/arts). A senior lecturer title may be awarded to a holder of a *magister* or *specialist* (Master of science/arts or Specialist). The procedure for granting titles to teaching and research faculty and faculty assistants *(habilitacija)* is stipulated in detail by the constitution of the higher education institution. Assistant professors, associate professors, researchers, senior researchers, lecturers and senior lecturers are rewarded the respective title for five years, while professors and research advisers are granted the respective title for an unlimited period. Removal of the title is possible.

Vacancies for positions are announced publicly. A higher education institution may contract a private teacher and invite distinguished teachers, scientists, experts and artists for a limited term, without regard to the requirements for a title.

Within a six-year employment term, a teaching faculty member is eligible for in-depth advanced scientific study in the field of research for a maximum total of 12 months.

6.7. Statistics

1997/98

Academic year	1997/98	
Higher education institutions	Public	Private
Number of institutions	37	5
Number of undergraduates of whom	63 508	1 170
– in short-type higher education	4 990	n
– in professional higher education	20 157	1 170
– in university	38 361	n
Number of postgraduate students	a	a
Number of teachers (faculty)*	1 736	39

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia

* The number of teachers includes the faculty members at the undergraduate level, given as FTE (full-time equivalent); there are also 1471 assistants and 1825 non-academic staff.

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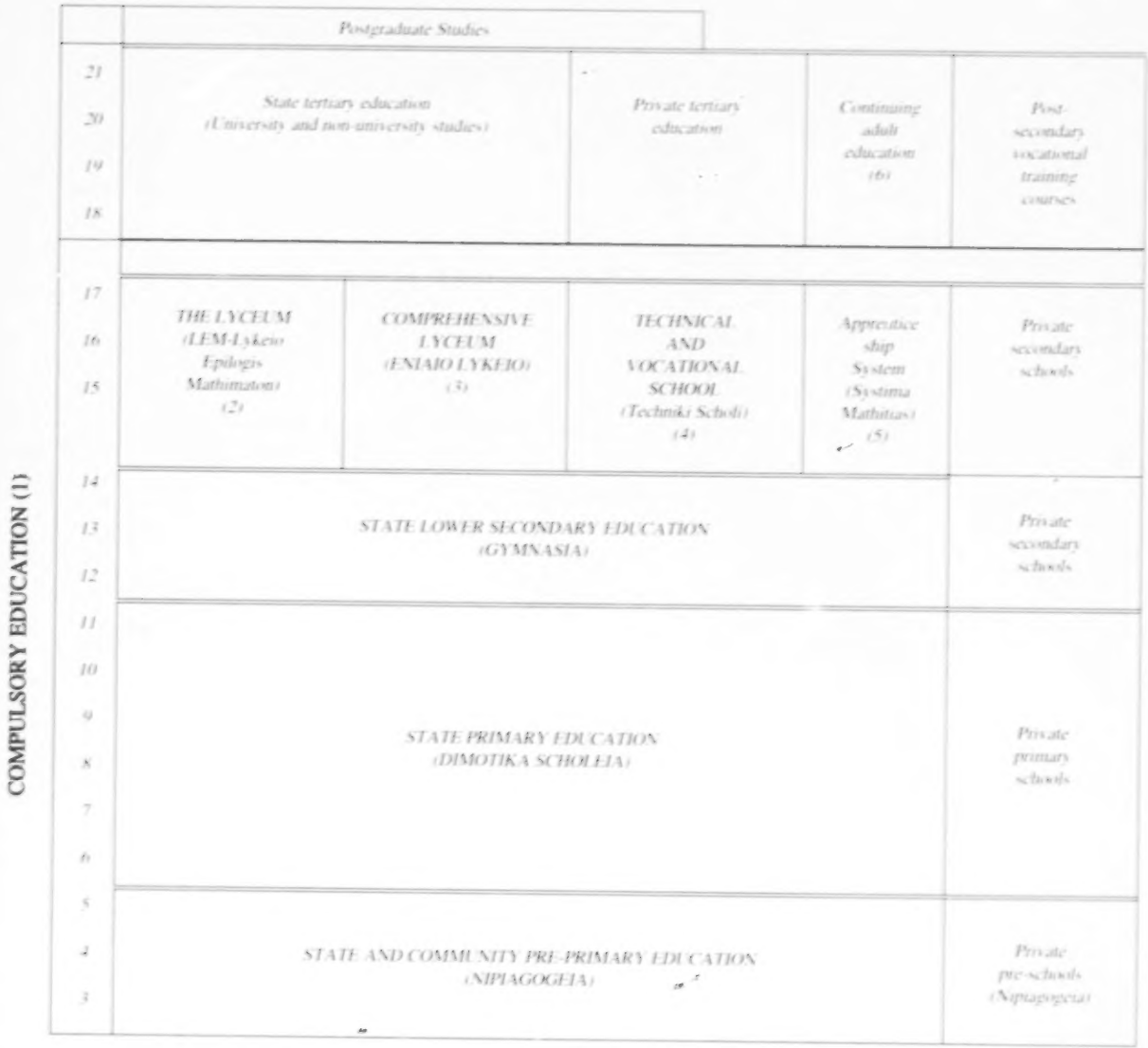
Cyprus



(1) Compulsory education lasts nine years, (from 5 years 8 months to 15 years). It usually covers primary and lower secondary levels.

(2) The *Lykeio LEM* provides general upper secondary education with specialisation in five combinations of subjects.

(3) The *Eniaio Lykeio* (experimental in 3 schools since September 1995) provides uppersecondary education with individual subject specialisation. It aims at integrating general education with technical education and vocational training.

(4) The Technical School provides a three-year upper secondary education in the technical or the vocational streams. Graduates of the technical stream can opt to pursue higher technological studies or employment. The vocational stream provides industry with a manual work force.

(5) The Apprenticeship System, run jointly by the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance is a two-year initial vocational education and training programme for pupils aged 15 to 18.

(6) Continuing adult education is available either in an evening *Lykeio* for employed early school leavers or adults wishing to complete secondary school or in short-module community education/training evening sessions.

(7) Re: Male Citizens of Cyprus
With the exception of successful candidates in the Higher Technological Institute, who defer their national military service requirements, all male secondary school graduates are mandated by law to enlist in the National Guard for two-year military service prior to pursuing employment or tertiary education.

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Cyprus

1. Responsibilities and administration

1.1. Background

Cyprus is an island located in the eastern Mediterranean Sea. It covers a total area of 9 250 square kilometres. The population is 746 100 (December 1997) from which 83% (619 263) are Greek, 12% Turkish (88 200) and 5% other (38 637). Remains of the oldest known settlement in Cyprus date from the Neolithic Age in 7 000 BC. The predominant religion in Cyprus is Eastern Orthodox.

The Republic of Cyprus was granted independence in 1960 after a struggle against the United Kingdom. In 1974 there was a Turkish invasion on the island, which resulted in 37% of Cyprus still being under Turkish occupation. Since then 200 000 Cypriots have become refugees and 1 619 people are still missing. For over 20 years, Turkey, in violation of numerous UN and security council resolutions, has kept the island divided.

The pupil and student population of the government-controlled area in Cyprus during the 1996/97 academic year was 64 761 in primary education (62 046 in public schools and 2 715 in private schools), 61 266 in secondary education (55 117 in public schools and 6 149 in private schools), and 9 982 in tertiary education (4 978 in public schools and 5 004 in private schools). During 1996/97 there were 9 813 students abroad.

The present document covers mainly information on education in the government-controlled area.

1.2. Basic principles of the education system

In broad terms, the principles governing education in Cyprus are:

- Education must constitute part of the wider socio-economic, cultural and special characteristics of Cyprus and should be intended to transform these successfully into educational objectives;
- Education should have internal and external coherence, an educational planning system and a democratic structure of educational administration;
- There should always be a strong link and mutual influence between education and life.

Many reforms have taken place in education in the 38 years of life of the Republic. What is worth noting are the latest major reforms which have been in effect since 1 September 1998. These are:

Primary education

- New primary school students will now begin at the age of 5 years and 8 months, instead of five-and-a-half until now.
- The maximum number of students in classes of level A and level B will decrease from 32 to 30, and from 34 to 32 respectively.

Secondary education

- All schools will be connected to the Internet and the use of computers to enhance teaching will be encouraged. A lot of planning is under way.
- A new procedure for the appointment of new teachers is proposed by the Ministry of Education and Culture which is expected to secure the best teachers for our schools. This proposal is pending approval by the Cyprus House of Representatives.

Pedagogical Institute

In the 1998/99 academic year the Pedagogical Institute is planning to begin the design of standardised testing in mathematics and science. This will enable the Ministry of Education and Culture to study the quality of education in these subjects on a yearly basis. Other subjects will follow in the near future.

1.3. Distribution of responsibilities

Educational administration is centralised. The highest authority for educational policy-making is the Council of Ministers. Overall responsibility for education rests with the Ministry of Education (extended in 1994 over Culture as well). However, a small number of vocational and post-secondary institutions come under the Ministries of Labour and Social Insurance, Agriculture, and Health.

The Ministry of Education and Culture is responsible for the administration of education, the enforcement of education laws and, in cooperation with the Office of the Attorney General, the preparation of education bills. The bills are tabled for debate and approved by the House of Representatives.

1.4. Administration

Appointments, secondments, transfers, promotions and discipline of the teaching personnel and the inspectorate are the responsibility of the Education Service Commission, a five-member body appointed by the President of the Republic for a period of six years.

The construction of school buildings is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Culture, while their maintenance is undertaken by the local school boards in collaboration with the Technical Services of the Ministry. The responsibility for equipment of school buildings is shared by the Ministry and the local school boards.

Overall planning is done by the Planning Bureau, an independent authority of the Republic. Similar planning is done by all ministries which offer post-secondary specialised education. Their development policies are first submitted to the Planning Bureau for comments before they are forwarded to the Council of Ministers for final approval.

1.5. Inspection/Supervision/Guidance

At the pre-primary, primary and secondary level, the overall responsibility for supervising the proper functioning of the schools rests with the inspectorate. Moreover, in the case of public education, the inspectorate has responsibility for the implementation of the government's educational policies for curriculum development and for the appraisal of teaching personnel. There are inspectorates for every directorate at these levels. At the primary and pre-primary levels, the majority of the inspectors have responsibilities for all the subjects, but there are some that have responsibility for special subjects (art, physical education etc.) or areas (e.g. special education). At the secondary level, the inspectors have responsibilities in particular areas of the curriculum (e.g. mathematics, philology etc.). It is also their responsibility to act as advisers and guide the teachers they inspect to improve their performance and develop them professionally. Responding to this responsibility, they organise educational seminars of a practical nature at least twice a year.

At the tertiary level, the responsibility for accreditation of the private institutions rests with an independent body, the Council for Assessment and Accreditation, while the supervision and registration of such institutions is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Culture. The Ministry's officers are also responsible for supervising and ensuring that private tertiary institutions comply with the provisions of the laws. The Cyprus Council for Academic Recognition *(Kypriako Symvoulio Anagnorisis Titlon Spoudon)* is an independent body with responsibility for the academic recognition of diplomas and certificates from various sources.

1.6. Financing

Public education is mainly financed by the Government either directly or through allotments to local authorities or school boards while private education is supported by individuals and governing bodies. Private foreign language schools might be assisted by affiliated overseas authorities and organisations.

Public and community pre-primary education is supervised and partially financed by the Government.

Primary and lower secondary education is compulsory up to the age of 15. Public primary education is free. The Government provides the means for the public schools and awards annual grants to local authorities to undertake their responsibilities. In the public sector, financing covers every educational need including the free provision of books.

Public secondary education is also free. In the case of general secondary education, financial provisions are the responsibility of the Government either directly or through the school boards (by awarding grants to them). Financing of technical and vocational secondary schools is the direct responsibility of the Government. Financing covers every educational need including the free provision of the majority of the textbooks that are used.

Public tertiary institutions are financed in various ways as they come under various ministries but essentially all their costs are covered by the public budget. The University of Cyprus is financed by the State. The University charges fees but the Government offers grants. Details are presented in section 6.2.2.

Private schools are mainly self-financed. Those which are registered as non-profit organisations receive co-finance by the Government. Some also receive financing from community funds or religious groups.

1.7. Advisory/Consultative/Participatory bodies

The Ministry of Education and Culture invites suggestions on its policies from the Educational Council, a widely representative body consisting of representatives of other government bodies, the Church, the Parliamentary Committee for Education, the parents' associations, the teachers' associations and seven community members known for their keen interest in educational matters. The members of the Council are usually nominated by the Minister of Education and Culture and appointed by the Council of Ministers.

1.8. Private Schools

Private schools are independently administered but are registered with the Ministry of Education and Culture. The Ministry inspects the schools but not the teachers since no special inspectorate is available for this yet. The private schools have to obey certain laws and regulations made for private schools and the Ministry of Education and Culture has the authority to examine whether the laws and regulations are implemented.

2. Pre-school education *(Proscholiki Ekpaidefsi)*

Following the island's invasion by Turkey in 1974, pre-school education expanded rapidly in Cyprus in response to social needs brought about by the post-invasion population redistribution. Today, there is a well-established pre-primary education system with state kindergarten institutions supported by community and parental involvement, as well as private pre-schools *(Nipiagogeia)* serving approximately 75% of the child population aged between 3 years and 5 years 8 months. Attendance is not compulsory but recommended for the enrichment of the children's experiential background.

State kindergarten schools cater for approximately 64% of pre-school children from middle or low-income families. Admission criteria are based on yearly income and family status (working, single-parent or refugee families). Private kindergarten schools cater for children not accommodated in the government sector.

2.1. Organisation of pre-schools

Kindergartens are coeducational and operate five days a week, usually from the beginning of September to the end of June. Some private kindergartens also operate in the summer. State kindergartens fall into two categories, namely public and community institutions. Public kindergartens *(Dimosia Nipiagogeia)* are staffed and subsidised by the State. The remaining running costs are borne by parents who, in consultation with local authorities, also provide the building facilities. Community kindergartens *(Koinotika Nipiagogeia)* are subsidised by the State, although the local authorities are responsible for recruiting staff and providing the building facilities.

Drawing on the government policy to provide pre-school children with equal educational opportunities, there has been a recent trend to establish regional kindergartens in rural areas. The existing regulations state that a kindergarten can be established in a community if there are at least 15 children in it. Classes are organised by age. The maximum number of children in each group cannot exceed 30 if children are aged between four-and-a-half and 5 years 8 months, 26 if children are aged between three-and-a-half and four-and-a-half, and 20 if children are between three and three-and-a-half.

2.2. Curriculum/Assessment

The curriculum put forward by the Ministry of Education and Culture for kindergartens serves cognitive, emotional and psychomotor goals and skills. Kindergarten teachers have the flexibility to structure their own curriculum, which is mainly dealt with through topic work. Emphasis is placed on language acquisition, introduction to mathematical and science concepts and creative arts through music, art and movement.

Kindergartens run from 7.30 a.m. to 1p.m. The school day starts with creative play for one hour followed by topic work for the rest of the day. Teaching is both formal and informal, enriched with the use of concrete materials. Child assessment provides the basis for planning instruction procedures and reporting to parents. Clearly, the programme is not designed to prepare children for primary schools. Instead, it is intended to help them acquire learning skills, develop a self-reliant approach to learning and, through participation in activities, mature cognitively and emotionally for the disciplined work required in primary schools.

2.3. Teachers

There are 378 and 260 kindergarten teachers employed in public and community institutions respectively. Qualified kindergarten teachers fall into three different categories based on their training. The first category includes teachers who attended a two-year training course either in Cyprus or in Greece. The second category includes teachers who attended a three-year training course at the Cyprus Pedagogical Academy *(Pedagogiki Akadimia Kyprou)* between the years 1967 and 1992. The third category includes university graduates of the University of Cyprus as well as overseas tertiary institutions. The status of kindergarten teachers is equivalent to that of primary school teachers and they have the same remuneration and fringe benefits.

Kindergarten teachers are not subject specialists. Children are grouped on the basis of age and are taught by the same teacher throughout the day.

In-service education of kindergarten teachers includes compulsory one-day seminars organised by kindergarten school inspectors twice a year and optional brief courses on the foundations of education/curriculum implementation offered by the Pedagogical Institute *(Pedagogiko Institouto)*.

2.4. Statistics

Schools, children and teachers, 1996/97

Status of school	Number of schools	Children	Teachers	Children/Teacher ratio
Public	236	8 916	466	19.1
Kindergartens	225	8 398	409	20.5
Day nurseries	11	518	57	9.1
Community	152	5 925	292	20.3
Under Ministry of Education	107	3 969	177	22.4
Under Dept. of Welfare Services	45	1 956	115	17.0
Private	271	11 155	668	16.7
Under Ministry of Education	106	5 673	337	16.8
Under Dept. of Welfare Services	165	5 482	331	16.6
Total	659	25 996	1 426	18.2

3. Compulsory education/Training

All Cypriots are required by law to attend school full-time from the age of 5 years 8 months to the age of 15, or until they complete their third year in the Gymnasium, whichever comes first. Compulsory education is divided into six years of primary education *(Protovathmia ekpaidefsi)* and three years of lower secondary education *(Gymnasio)*.

3.1. Primary education *(Protovathmia Ekpaidefsi)*

Being compulsory for children aged 5 years 8 months, primary education is provided free of charge and with no entrance requirements in public primary schools *(Dimotika Scholeia)* available throughout the country, even in remote areas. A small number of private primary schools entail fees and cater to foreign nationals and native residents who opt for a particular foreign language as the basis of instruction for their children. All private schools are subject to supervision and inspection by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Primary schools are coeducational and provide mixed-ability teaching. In urban areas and large rural schools, Cyprus has adopted single-grade classes, while small communities are catered for by multi-grade classes. Teachers are allocated in such a way that in no case will any one teacher have responsibility for more than 34 pupils.

In urban areas most of the large schools are divided in two cycles, cycle A and cycle B, comprising grades 1 to 3 and 4 to 6 respectively.

Schools maintain links with the community through Parents' Associations *(Syndesmoi Goneon)* which organise various events to raise funds to help the better running of schools.

3.1.1. Organisation of the school

In rural areas, primary schools are available in every town or village with a minimum number of 15 pupils. Outreach communities with fewer than 15 pupils have area schools (Periferiaka Scholeia) serving them in special set-ups:

- one-teacher schools with pupil population ranging from 15 to 19;
- two-teacher schools with pupil population ranging from 20 to 39;
- schools with more than two teachers in which the maximum number of pupils per teacher does not exceed 34. (For grade 1, it is 30 pupils and for grade 2 it is 32).

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The school year, divided into three terms (Trimina), each averaging 14 weeks, begins in September and ends in June with two-week breaks at Christmas and Easter. School days begin at 7.45 a.m. and end at 1.05 p.m. on a five-day week timetable. School buildings are usually used by only one set of pupils per day.

3.1.2. Curriculum

Curricula for primary education are prescribed by the Ministry of Education and Culture on the basis of suggestions made by teachers and inspectors. Primary school subjects are all compulsory. A statutory time allocation for each subject is illustrated in the table below.

Teaching periods of each subject for each grade per week

	Grades					
Subjects	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
Greek language	13	13	14	13	10	10
Mathematics	5	5	6	6	6	6
Religion	2	2	2	2	2	2
History	–	–	2	2	2	2
Geography	–	–	2	2	2	2
Patridognosia	3	3	–	–	–	–
Science	–	–	2	2	2	2
P.E.	2	2	2	2	2	2
Art	2	2	2	2	2	2
Music	2	2	2	2	2	2
English as a foreign language	–	–	–	2	2	2
Home economics/ Design and technology	2	2	–	–	2	2
Free activities	–	–	–	–	1	1
TOTAL	31	31	34	35	35	35

In addition to the ordinary curriculum, remedial teaching programmes focusing on Greek language and mathematics are designed for less competent pupils. Induction classes for children of repatriates and immigrants are also available in most primary schools.

Pedagogy and flexible classroom organisation allow for diversity in teaching methods and promote interaction between teachers and pupils. Teachers are required to encourage pupils to participate in practical and research projects involving both group work and individual tasks.

Teachers are provided with textbooks and advice on how to implement the national curriculum. A considerable number of new books, written by practising teachers under the guidance of inter-departmental committees (consisting of members of the inspectorate, representatives of the Pedagogical Institute and teachers' union representatives), have been published over the last seven years in order to facilitate the implementation of the curriculum.

3.1.3. Assessment/Guidance

Focusing on the importance of self-evaluation and teacher evaluation on a systematic basis, the assessment of pupils is based on overall class participation, oral and written tests and the results of work done at school and at home.

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Although there is no standardised test to assess each pupil's achievement in any subject, there is a descriptive assessment of pupils which allows teachers to provide pupils and their parents with information on the results of each pupil's efforts at school and abilities in each subject.

At the end of each school year, pupils of grades 1 through 5 are awarded a progress certificate *(Deltio Proodou)*; sixth-year pupils receive a leaving certificate *(Apolytirio)*.

The term 'pass' *(proagetai)* on both types of certificates does not actually correspond to an indication of successful completion of school-year work as almost all primary school pupils automatically move to the next class. A pupil must repeat a class only when the teacher, the respective school inspector, the child's parents and the educational psychologist agree that repeating a class is in the best interest of the child.

3.1.4. Teachers

Most primary school teachers in service are graduates of the Cyprus Pedagogical Academy three-year programme of studies and hold a teacher's certificate. Nowadays, Cypriot pre-primary and primary student-teachers attend a four-year programme of studies in education at the University of Cyprus *(Panepistimio Kyprou)*.

Teachers are allocated by class and are not, therefore, trained to become subject specialists. However, subjects such as music and physical education are often taught by subject-specialist teachers.

Focusing on the content and the teaching of various curriculum areas, the in-service training of primary teachers consists primarily of optional courses or seminars offered by the Pedagogical Institute *(Pedagogiko Institouto)*. Since such courses and seminars are held after working hours, they are not easily accessible to most teachers. Thus, attendance is primarily a personal choice.

Primary teachers appointed in state education are civil servants. They usually complete a two-year probationary period before receiving permanent appointment.

3.1.5. Statistics

100% of pupils complete primary school education. Their age ranges from 11 years 6 months to 12 years 6 months.

Schools and pupils by size of school (1996/97)

Size (number of pupils)	Public		Private	
	Schools	Pupils	Schools	Pupils
Less than 20	21	336	0	0
20 and less than 50	54	1 686	6	205
50 and less than 100	42	3 105	7	526
100 and less than 150	41	5 113	4	518
150 and less than 200	46	8 161	3	553
200 and less than 250	53	11 883	1	207
250 and less than 300	41	11 056	1	277
300 and less than 350	20	6 503	0	0
350 and less than 400	21	7 729	0	0
400 and over	14	6 474	1	429

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Pupils and teachers by area and pupils per teacher (1996/97)

Area	Public			Private		
	Pupils	Teachers	Pupils/Teacher	Pupils	Teachers	Pupils/Teacher
Urban	41 575	2 515	16.5	2 520	212	11.9
Rural	20 471	1 414	14.5	195	18	10.8
Total	62 046	3 929	15.8	2 715	230	11.8

3.2. Secondary education *(Defterovathmia Ekpaidefsi)*

Secondary education, whether public or private, encompasses a large sector of the educational structure in the government-controlled area of the Cyprus Republic. Once a privilege of the few residing in urban areas, secondary education is now compulsory for children through the age of fifteen and accessible to both urban and rural or outreach communities alike.

Schools in Cyprus are coeducational and range from small rural to average-sized regional and large urban establishments, depending on the number of pupils to be accommodated in each educational catchment area. Following the displacement of 40% of the Greek-Cypriot population of the island after the 1974 Turkish invasion, a number of new public school buildings have been built to replace those under Turkish occupation and accommodate the children of displaced families settled in the government-controlled area.

Public secondary education establishments fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education and Culture – the governing body for all issues pertaining to education and administration, and are subject to periodic reviews in a centralised administration structure. On the local level, governed by a set of rules and regulations mandated by statutes and by policies of the Ministry of Education and Culture, secondary schools have the authority to enforce the law applicable to their internal affairs.

3.2.1. Organisation of the school

3.2.1.1. Public secondary education *(Dimosia Defterovathmia Ekpaidefsi)*

Overview

Public secondary education offers a six-year programme of instruction for children aged twelve to eighteen. Having a general education orientation, it is compulsory for the first three years, or until they reach their fifteenth birthday. In the last three years, it follows a more flexible and diverse orientation, catering for individual inclinations, aptitudes and interests. Attendance is compulsory for the successful completion of graduation requirements.

Drawing on a rich cultural and religious heritage in a blend of turmoil, tampering on mores and value conflict as a result of a series of colonial rulers and the long-drawn Turkish occupation and expansionist intentions on the island, public secondary education has come a long way since colonial rule, from its crude stages to its present quantitative and qualitative status. Considering the socio-economic, cultural and national needs of Cyprus, public secondary education offers equal opportunities for education and aims at promoting friendship and cooperation between the various communities of the country. The philosophy underlying public secondary education is twofold:

- the dissemination of knowledge with emphasis on general education and a gradual transition to specialisation in order to prepare students for an academic, professional or business career;
- the development of a sound, morally refined personality in order to provide society with competent, democratic and law-abiding citizens.

Principles pervading the overall school milieu are:

- the assimilation of national identity and cultural values;
- the promotion of universal ideals for freedom, justice and peace;

– the nurturing of love and respect for fellow human beings in order to promote mutual understanding and democracy.

Public secondary education is available to all eligible pupils, i.e. holders of a primary school-leaving certificate, at no charge except for a minimal registration fee of CYP 5 and the cost of purchase of foreign language textbooks.

School buildings are primarily used by one set of pupils attending secondary education. The length of the school day is 7.30 a.m. to 1.35 p.m. Studies based on statistical data projecting future needs allow ample time for new school buildings to cater for any increase in demand. However, the same buildings are used for non-formal education programmes operating in the afternoons and evenings as follows:

– each major town runs one evening high school programme *(Esperino Gymnasio)* offered to adults wishing to acquire and/or complete their secondary education and receive a secondary school leaving certificate *(Apolytirio)*;
– the state institutes of further education *(Kratika Institouta Epimorfosis – KIE)* run afternoon and evening programmes offered to primary and secondary school pupils as well as adults wishing to pursue intensive studies in foreign languages, computer science, Greek for non-native speakers and university entrance subjects.

The academic year commences on 1 September and ends on 31 August. It is divided into three trimester terms *(Trimina)* (10 Sept.-10 Dec., 10 Dec.-10 Mar., 10 Mar.-31 May). Lessons begin on 10 September and finish towards the end of May. They run on a five-day week, with seven periods of 45 minutes a day. June is a month for examinations.

Classes are organised by age; however, regardless of age, pupils must achieve a minimum level of competence to proceed from one class to another. In the upper division, due to specialisation programmes, a number of classes in the last two years are sub-divided into subject-oriented groups for certain periods each week.

Forty-five-minute lessons involving teacher/pupil interaction with whole-class participation, group and pair work are enriched with updated textbooks and audio-visual materials. Special projects encouraging self-study and team work are launched on special topics of interest relevant to the yearly educational aim set by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Prescribed subject textbooks corresponding to the syllabi for each class are supplemented by other teaching aids and materials produced by the Curriculum Development Unit *(Ypiresia Anaptyxis Programmaton)* or selected by teachers independently.

There has been a growing interest in linking secondary schools with the business world, in an effort to provide students with an opportunity to experience actual work conditions in their field of interest. A pilot project initiated between 1986 and 1988 to accomplish this objective has been adopted with success: 17-year-old students in the second year of Lyceum work for one week in a factory, firm, office, bank, hospital, farm or other establishment of their choice.

Educational and vocational guidance is provided on a continuous basis by specially assigned counsellors in each school. Intervention to tackle emotional problems faced by pupils from dysfunctional families is also the task of the counsellor, who makes referrals and maintains close cooperation with community resources on a continuous basis.

3.2.1.2. Private secondary education *(Idiotiki Defterovathmia Ekpaidefsi)*

A number of non-profit and profit-making secondary establishments ranging from missionary boarding schools to vocationally-oriented institutions and foreign language centres offer tuition in specialised fields. Funded by overseas organisations and/or religious denominations and local entrepreneurs, private secondary schools offer students the opportunity to pursue qualifications that would ensure:

– their smooth transition into the professional sphere or the business world;
– their admission to overseas universities or local tertiary education establishments of their choice for diploma or degree studies.

Although private secondary schools maintain a considerable degree of independence in their operation and curricula, the majority of them are registered with the Ministry of Education and Culture and comply with certain curriculum and facility requirements mandated by law.

3.2.1. Curriculum

3.2.1.1. Public schools *(Gymnasio)*

Gymnasio caters for pupils aged between 12 and 15, and offers a broad spectrum of general education. A public primary school leaving certificate is required for entrance to the *Gymnasio*. Private foreign-language primary school leavers must undergo a series of entrance examinations to enter public secondary schools.

Uniformity and coherence in the syllabus allow for a smooth transition from primary school to the world of secondary education. There has been a major innovation in the curricula of general secondary education with the introduction of the 'unified nine-year curriculum' aimed at easing the transition of pupils from primary to lower secondary schools.

Subject allocation in weekly periods in the *Gymnasio*

Subject	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3
Periods/week			
1. Religious education	2	2	2
2. Modern Greek	5	5	5
3. Greek language and literature	3.5	3	3.5
4. Mathematics	4	3	4
5. History	3	2	2
6. Civics	–	–	0.5
7. Vocational guidance	–	–	0.5
8. Geography	1	1	1
9. Physics		2	2
10. Chemistry		1	1
11. Botany-zoology	2	–	–
12. Anthropology	–	1	–
13. Biology	–	–	1
14. English	3	3	3.5
15. French	1.5	1.5	2
16. Art	2	2	1
17. Music	2	2	1
18. Physical education	3	3	3
19. Home economics/Design-Technology	3	3	2
20. First aid	–	0.5	–
Total	35	35	35

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3.2.2.2. Private schools

Curricular programmes for most private secondary schools extend over a six-year period with emphasis on general education for the first three years. Foreign language schools have six- or seven-year curricular programmes with English, French, Italian or Arabic as the basic languages of instruction. A few private secondary schools are attached to primary schools providing an integrated twelve- or thirteen-year programme. There are no entrance examinations except in certain foreign language schools.

3.2.3. Assessment/Guidance

Continuous assessment in the *Gymnasio* is on a scale of A-E. It is both oral and written (quizzes, revision tests and individual or group projects), supplemented by compulsory internally set final examinations in June on a 1-20 scale for Greek, mathematics, history and natural science. The Department of Secondary Education is considering the inclusion of English in the final examinations *(telikes exetaseis)*.

In the last year of the *Gymnasio*, vocational guidance *(epangelmatiki agogi)* offers pupils an opportunity to familiarise themselves with career prospects, explore academic options after successful completion of the *Gymnasio*, and thus select the field or combination of studies they wish to follow in the upper division.

Private schools follow their own assessment system and offer the necessary guidance.

3.2.4. Teachers

A university degree in the subject to be taught makes a teacher eligible for inclusion in the official register of candidates for appointment.

A teacher's appointment is based on a system where primary priority is determined by the year of submitting the application (on the principle 'first come first served'). Secondary priority (among the applicants of the same year) is decided on a system of units which the candidate accumulates according to the date(s) of graduation, special qualifications and a personal interview.

Prior to appointment, a teacher may serve as a substitute for short- or long-term needs and/or maintain temporary status on contracts.

A newly-appointed teacher is on probation for two years and has to undergo in-service training. Working on a full-time basis, newly-appointed teachers are relieved of their teaching duties two days a week for one academic year to attend compulsory in-service training. They gain permanent status only after its successful completion. In-service training is provided by qualified local staff on a secondment basis at the Pedagogical Institute. Optional seminars relating to content and approach are held during teachers' free time.

Newly promoted secondary deputy heads attend compulsory once-a-week courses for a year. These courses focus on administrative and coordinating skills.

Teachers are civil servants and, although they are appointed by an independent body, the Education Service Committee, they come under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education and Culture.

3.2.5. Statistics

Primary school leavers who proceeded to secondary schools (*Gymnasia*), 1995/96

Sex	Public		Private	
	Pupils	%	Pupils	%
Male	5 196	91.6	465	8.2
Female	4 794	93.0	357	6.9

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Pupils in lower secondary education completing Grade 3 and graduates, as a percentage of those enrolled in grade 1

School year	Enrolled in grade 1		Successfully completed grade 3 three years later		Graduated	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1994/95	11 495	100.0	9 503	89.6	7 064	78.4
1995/96	11 377	100.0	9 250	88.1	7 403	79.2

4. Post-compulsory secondary education

4.1. Organisation of the school

Open to all pupils who have successfully completed the *Gymnasio*, ***Lykeio*** offers diversity and encompasses three distinct programme curricula, all leading to a school leaving certificate, *Apolytirio*.

Upper secondary education offers compulsory core subjects in general education with incorporated specialisation in:

- optional subjects *(mathimata epilogis)* and supplementary subjects/electives *(sympliromatika mathimata)* in five combinations in ***Lykeio - LEM*** (classical, science, economics, commercial, foreign languages);
- technical and vocational subjects and workshop practice in technical/vocational school ***(Techniki Scholi)***;
- selected subjects and electives on an individual basis in the comprehensive lyceum ***(Eniaio Lykeio)***.

4.2. Curriculum

4.2.1. The lyceum *(Lykeio – LEM)*

Lykeio – LEM (*Lykeio Epilogis Mathimaton*, or subject selection *lyceum*) offers pupils a three-year programme with three categories of subjects structured in five streams or combinations. They include compulsory core subjects (*mathimata koinou kormou*), specialisation subjects (*mathimata epilogis*) and supplementary subjects (*sympliromatika mathimata*). Pupils select a combination (*Syndyasmo*) upon registration.

Combination I *(Syndyasmos 1 - S1)* focuses on classical studies.

Combination II *(Syndyasmos 2 - S2)* focuses on mathematics, physics and chemistry.

Combination III *(Syndyasmos 3 - S3)* focuses on economics and mathematics.

Combination IV *(Syndyasmos 4 - S4)* focuses on clerical skills and accounting.

Combination V *(Syndyasmos 5 - S5)* focuses on foreign languages and social studies.

Academic and vocational guidance is provided by full-time counsellors of the Ministry's **Counselling and Careers Education Service** ***(Ypiresia Symvouleftikis kai Epangelmatikis Agogis)*** throughout the pupil's attendance at *Lykeio*, both in class sessions and on a personal basis on request. Such guidance allows pupils to become oriented with prospective employment opportunities and explore their aptitudes and aspirations in order to pursue the most suitable specialisation and supplementary subjects *(mathimata epilogis kai sympliromatika mathimata)* in their second and third year of attendance at *Lykeio*.

4.2.2. The technical and vocational school *(Techniki Scholi)*

The technical and vocational programme is divided into two main streams, the technical stream *(Techniki Ekpaidefsi)* and the vocational stream *(Epangelmatiki Ekpaidefsi)*. Both of them offer a wide range of general education subjects and also subjects related to the selected streams of study. Both streams also include drawing and technology subjects and practical work in adequately equipped workshops and laboratories. The vocational stream requires, in the final year, that students be placed in approved enterprises for two days a week in order to obtain the industrial experience required by their course of study.

4.2.3. The comprehensive upper secondary school *(Eniaio Lykeio)*

In an effort to eliminate widespread prejudice towards technical/vocational education and to effect qualitative changes in the sphere of secondary education to meet the growing demands for mobility and flexibility within the boundaries of a united Europe, proposals of an *ad hoc* committee resulted in the new concept of *Eniaio Lykeio*.

Currently implemented in three selected urban schools *Eniaio Lykeio* is a pilot project aimed at integrating the general education programme and the technical/vocational branch. The integration of secondary education is intended to render lyceum education consistent with current trends, especially those prevalent in the European Community and to broaden curricula in order to enhance the relevance of education to the real world.

Eniaio Lykeio aims at:

- offering pupils the opportunity to develop all facets of their capabilities through general and specific scientific and technical knowledge, modern technological methods and media, so that they can respond to a changing world and adapt to an evolving work environment;
- linking the school with the outside world thus offering the pupils opportunities to familiarise themselves with the world of work and production in order to plan their career more effectively whether they aim at being employed, venturing into entrepreneurship or pursuing higher education;
- expanding curricula and offering programmes with diversity and flexibility, *incorporating the selection of individual subjects as opposed to combinations of subjects, and deferring specialisation.*

Some more details on the comprehensive lyceum curriculum are shown in the table below.

The comprehensive lyceum curriculum (experimental as of September 1995 in three schools)

Grades Subjects	A	B	C	TOTAL
Core subjects	31	17	15	63
Specialisation subjects	4	16	20	40
Supplementary subjects	–	2	–	2
Total	35	35	35	105

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Subject	Grade A	Grade B	Grade C
1. Religious education	2	1	2
2. Modern Greek	4	4	5
3. Civics	–	–	1
4. Biology-anthropology	0.5	–	–
5. Music	1	–	–
6. Art	1	–	–
7. Physical education	2	1	1
8. Classical Greek	3	2	–
9. History	2	2	2
10. Mathematics	3	2	2
11. Physics-chemistry	2.5	3	–
12. English	3	2	2
13. French	2	–	–
14. Economics	2	–	–
15. Computer studies	1	–	–

* Numbers in the tables above represent teaching periods of 45 minutes each

4.3. Assessment/Guidance

Continuous assessment in the upper division (Lyceum, technical school, *Eniaio Lykeio* is on a scale of 1-20). It is also both oral and written (quizzes, revision tests, class tests and projects) supplemented by compulsory internally-set final examinations in Greek, mathematics and the specialisation subjects in each of the combinations. In the last year of the upper division, nation-wide comprehensive final examinations on these subjects ensure objectivity of assessment. A regional task force undertakes to shuffle and distribute the unidentifiable scripts of final examination papers for marking and subsequent redistribution to the corresponding schools.

Following the nation-wide comprehensive final examination in the upper division, an aggregate of marks based on the results determines the pupil's successful graduation. A school-leaving certificate ***Apolytirio*** is the qualification for employment in clerical positions and provides access to local and overseas tertiary education establishments.

Secondary education graduates who pass the 'university entrance examinations' *(Eisagogikes Exetaseis)* are eligible to enter either the University of Cyprus or universities in Greece. Unsuccessful candidates can opt to pursue admission to overseas universities and public or private institutions which award diplomas below first university degree level, if they are holders of foreign language overseas university admission credentials.

4.4. Teachers

See paragraph under 3.2.4

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4.5. Statistics

Number of students per type of school per grade level, 1997/98

Grade level	General *(LEM)*	Comprehensive *(ENIAIO)*	Technical and vocational *(Techniki)*
1	7 160	759	1 530
2	5 942	872	1 333
3	5 841	929	1 220
Total	18 943	2 560	4 083

About 60% of all secondary school leavers continue their studies beyond secondary level: 34% of them attend higher education institutions in Cyprus and the remaining 26% attend higher education institutions abroad; 36.4% tertiary education students attend public institutions whereas 63.6% attend private institutions in Cyprus and abroad.

The pupil teacher ratio according to 1994/95 statistics is:

14.1 for secondary general education;
8.0 for secondary technical/vocational education;
13.6 for secondary private education.

5. Initial vocational training

5.1. Organisation of initial training establishments

While maintaining close links with industry and other state-run and private training institutions, secondary technical and vocational education (TVE) is integrated into the national school system. Playing a significant role within the educational, economic, industrial and social environment of Cyprus, it provides a broad range of technical/vocational education, initial training and retraining programmes to eligible gymnasium leavers and adults.

In the 37 years of its life span, more than 30 000 young people have successfully completed secondary technical and vocational programmes. 7 000 have been trained in the apprenticeship system *(Systima Mathitias)* and, since 1972, 20 250 have enrolled in afternoon and evening programmes. Entering the job market, all these trainees have contributed substantially to the economic and industrial development of Cyprus.

With a 45% increase in the number of students attending TVE programmes in recent years, the 1997/98 enrolment in TVE includes 4 083 pupils in secondary school programmes, 790 pupils in the apprenticeship system and 1 066 students in the afternoon and evening classes.

With a view to a positive response to the current and developmental needs of industry and the economy at large, TVE has maintained close cooperation and coordination with industry. The main areas in which TVE and industry have close links include:

- the Secondary Technical Education Advisory Committee aimed at updating and developing secondary technical and vocational education and training;
- advisory committees for each TVE Programme focusing on the fields of specialisation and securing feedback from the world of employment;
- training of TVE instructors in industry aimed at affording instructors and technologists opportunities to update their knowledge and skills.

- on-the-job training of final-year pupils of the vocational Programme aimed at:
  - improving the vocational training of pupils in order to ensure their smooth transition from school to work;
  - helping pupils assimilate and apply the knowledge and skills acquired at school;
  - giving pupils a headstart for developing professional ethics;
  - strengthening the links between the school education system and the training system.

On-the-job training programmes are implemented in accordance with authorised curricula under school supervision for periods determined jointly by the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Industrial Training Authority.

For students in the field of hotel studies, on-the-job training takes place over 22 weeks and is divided into 2 periods. The first takes place in the first year, lasts for 2 weeks and begins in late March or early April. The second begins at the end of the second year and ends at the beginning of the third year of study. For other specialisations, final-year students of the vocational cluster are placed in selected industrial units for two days a week for one year.

Cooperation with the Cyprus Industrial Training Authority is aimed at developing suitable training programmes for technical and vocational students and providing *ad hoc* committees on various issues involving joint efforts of TVE and ITA

5.2. Curriculum

5.2.1. Technical and vocational education streams *(Technika kai Epangelmatika Ekpaideftika Programmata)*

Upon completion of their compulsory lower secondary education, successful gymnasium leavers who do not opt for one of the five lyceum combinations or the *Eniaio Lykeio* (whereby technical and vocational subjects are integrated with lyceum combination subjects) are eligible for either the technical or the vocational option offered by technical schools *(Technikes Scholes)*. Run jointly by the Ministry of Education and Culture (Department of TVE) and the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, the apprenticeship system is an option for unsuccessful gymnasium leavers. TVE afternoon and evening programmes are mainly designed for training or retraining the adult work force.

The basic aim of the technical and vocational education programmes is to meet the academic and vocational needs of students. The knowledge and skills acquired are oriented towards enabling students to pursue appropriate technical or vocational jobs in industry or to advance their technical or vocational education and training in higher education institutions.

A variety of technical and vocational programmes include curricula designed to serve both the aims of each programme and the students' expectations.

Curriculum development is a collective effort involving qualified TVE staff, experts from other training institutions, TVE advisory committee members, trade union and industry representatives. The TVE curriculum is subject to approval by the Council of Ministers before being implemented.

Technical schools offer two distinct three-year secondary school programmes free of charge: the technical programme focusing on technician-level courses and the vocational programme focusing on craft-level courses.

The programmes provided include a variety of clusters in both the technical or technician courses and the vocational or craft courses. Examples of clusters provided include mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, building and civil engineering, hotel and catering, fashion design, graphic arts and interior design and other clusters. The great majority of programme clusters are offered in both the technical and vocational streams.

Mechanical engineering courses are offered at the technical level as machining and fitting and automobile mechanics and, at vocational level, as machining and fitting, sheet metal work and welding, plumbing and welding, and automobile mechanics specialisations.

The electrical engineering cluster offers courses at both technical and vocational levels. The technical level courses include electrical machines and installations, electronic appliances and computer electronics. At vocational level, the courses offered include electrical machines and installations and electrical appliances and refrigeration.

The building and civil engineering works offer courses in both the technical and vocational level provision. The technical level includes building and civil engineering works, and the vocational level includes building construction and building science and cabinet work.

The hotel and catering cluster provides courses in cookery and waiting only at the vocational level.

The fashion design cluster provides courses at both levels — fashion design at the technical level and dress making and draughting at vocational level.

The graphic arts and interior design cluster offers the course graphic arts and interior design at the technical level.

Additional courses offered at the vocational level include silversmithing and goldsmithing, shoemaking and hotel installations maintenance.

The apprenticeship system is the option available to young students aged between 15 and 18. There are a large variety of courses available including those for cabinet makers, electricians, automechanics, builders, plumbers, welders/plumbers, fitters/turners, goldsmiths/silversmiths, dress-makers, sheet metal workers, welders, welders/fitters, welders/turners/plumbers, carpenters and automobile electricians.

Additional evening courses are also provided to adults for initial or further training. Afternoon and evening preparatory classes for university entrance examinations are also made available to young students.

5.2.2. The technical stream *(To Techniko Programma)*

Technician-level courses are offered in a variety of specialisations with an emphasis on general subjects and science, which take up 58% of the total programme; 42% of the time is allocated to technology and workshops.

Specifically, the 35 teaching periods per week are allocated as follows: 30% are devoted to general subjects including religious education, modern Greek, languages, history and physical education, while 28% are devoted to related subjects which include mathematics, physics, chemistry and computers. 22% are devoted to technology and drawing and 20% of teaching time is devoted to practical work in workshops and laboratories.

5.2.3. The vocational stream *(To Epangelmatiko Programma)*

In the craft-level courses, special emphasis is given to technology and workshop skills at a 57.5% time allocation; the remaining 42.5% is devoted to general education subjects. Following a supervised practical training programme, final-year pupils of vocational courses are placed in approved enterprises for two days a week through their final year. Their progress and performance are closely monitored by instructors who maintain continuous contact with the employers.

The 35 teaching periods every week for the first two years of study are allocated as follows: 25% for general subjects, 17.5% for related subjects, 20% for technology and drawing and 37.5% for practical work in workshops. During the third and final year of the vocational streams, students attend school for only three days per week while they spend the remaining two days in industry. As a result, teaching time in all subjects is reduced proportionally so that the distribution becomes 15% for the general subjects, 10.5% for related subjects, 12% for technology and drawing, 22.5% for workshop practice (in school) and 40% for industrial experience.

5.2.4. The apprenticeship system *(Systima Mathitias)*

This is a two-year initial vocational education and training programme providing practical and theoretical training to young people who have not successfully completed their lower secondary compulsory education.

Pupils must be at least fifteen to be accepted in the apprenticeship system and must not be over eighteen at the time of graduation.

Theoretical classes and practical workshops are provided on the premises of technical schools two days each week. During the two days spent at school, students take the following subjects for both years of their study. 1 period in Greek language, 3 periods in technology, 2 periods in drawing and 5 periods in workshops/laboratory work. Practical training takes place within industry three days per week. Trainees are remunerated for their work in industry.

Students are trained to work as any of the following: builders, carpenters, cabinet makers, car mechanics, car electricians, electrical technicians, sheet metal workers/welders, aluminium manufacturers, machine workers/fitters, silversmiths/goldsmiths, shoemakers, or maintenance workers on techno-mechanical installations in hotels.

The apprenticeship system is not compulsory and is offered free of charge.

5.2.5. Afternoon and evening programmes in technical schools

The afternoon and evening departments of technical schools aim at:

- providing ongoing training in order to upgrade the skills and technical knowledge of the workforce so that it can respond to the changing demands of the labour market;
- preparing technical school pupils for the various examinations contemplated for the advancement of their academic and professional career.

Short-term modules on matters of new technology are available for mechanics/car mechanics, electricians, cabinet work and in the field of building works and construction.

Ongoing training programmes are optional and entail a low fee. They are extensively subsidised by the Department of Technical and Vocational Education of the Ministry of Education and Culture.

5.2.6. Training methods and materials

The underlying philosophy of TVE programmes emphasises the degree of interdependence and complementary nature of 'theory' and 'practice', aimed at facilitating the attainment of programme goals.

With regard to practical skills and instruction on relevant technological issues, the programmes are conducted in adequately equipped workshops, laboratories and technology classrooms. General knowledge subjects are offered in a conventional classroom setting. Plans are under way to improve technical school premises in order to ensure a more effective and enjoyable learning experience.

Modern teaching methods are being introduced, including team work and creative learning techniques. In a milieu where both cooperative and independent abilities are nurtured, pupils are encouraged to take initiative in guiding their learning, while teachers act as facilitators, demonstrating new skills to suit the mixed-ability classes they teach.

Frequent visits to industrial establishments give pupils first-hand experience in current working practices.

5.3. Assessment/Guidance

Criteria used to assess pupils include class participation, workshop and laboratory work, written assignments, projects, tests and a final examination.

The assessment procedures are similar to those of general secondary education.

School leaving certificates *(APOLYTIRIA)*, equivalent to those of secondary general education schools, are awarded upon successful completion of either programme. Therefore, TVE school leavers are eligible for admission to universities and other higher education institutions in Cyprus and other countries.

5.4. Trainers

Technical Schools are staffed with teachers of general subjects and teachers of technical subjects, i.e., instructors and technologists. The schemes of service for teachers and instructors provide for minimum qualifications, and candidates for appointment in the educational sector are placed on different salary scales, based on their academic qualifications. Two years of practical experience for university degree holders and five years of practical experience for candidates with lower academic qualifications is a prerequisite for teachers of technical subjects. Applicants for each specialisation from a ranked list based on the year of graduation, are offered appointments by the Education Service Committee. The terms of appointment to the educational service and the in-service training requirements are the same as in secondary education. In addition to the in-service training, instructors are also encouraged to attend seminars organised by private organisations or other professional bodies. Bilateral agreements facilitate the training of instructors abroad

6. Higher education *(Tritovathmia Ekpaidefsi)*

Tertiary education is provided in three different types of institutions: the University of Cyprus; public tertiary schools, colleges or institutes; and private tertiary schools, colleges or institutes. Organisation and admission procedures vary depending on the type of institution and the objectives of the educational programmes they provide.

6.1. Non-university higher education

6.1.1. Public tertiary education *(Dimosia Tritovathmia Ekpaidefsi)*

There are eight public tertiary education institutions offering sub-degree level programmes in technical engineering, forestry, hotel and catering, nursing and other vocations, and one institution offering postgraduate programmes in management. These institutions function under the supervision of various ministries and award their own diplomas.

6.1.1.2. Admission requirements

The number of students admitted to these institutions is limited and therefore the selection of candidates is based on the applicants' success in the entrance examinations.

6.1.1.3. Fees/financial aid for students

The student tuition fees range from CYP 1 000 to CYP 2 500 per year. Cypriot students receive a government grant for their tuition and therefore pay no fees. Foreign students pay tuition fees.

6.1.1.4. Academic year

The academic year in most public higher education institutions starts in September of each year and ends in July of the following year.

6.1.1.5. Courses/Programmes of study

Programmes of study are organised on a full-academic-year basis of 40 weeks, including examinations, Christmas and Easter holidays. They are divided into two semesters with compulsory attendance. The language of instruction is English in six of the institutions and Greek in the other three.

6.1.1.6. Assessment/Qualifications

Students are assessed by sitting mid-semester and semester examinations. However, coursework and labwork are also evaluated and comprise a percentage of the final mark in the particular subject. Examinations are the responsibility of the faculty. No comprehensive government examinations are offered. Successful completion of the programme, which lasts 2-3 years, leads to the institution's diploma or higher diploma.

6.1.2. Private schools of tertiary education

Twenty private tertiary education schools, colleges and institutes are registered with the Ministry of Education and Culture and offer a wide range of programmes of study. Programmes include business studies, engineering, social sciences, languages, education and others. Graduates from private tertiary education schools have very good employment opportunities especially in the private sector.

6.1.2.1. Admission requirements

Law 69 (I)/96 stipulates that applicants must have completed a six-year secondary education.

6.1.2.2. Fees/financial aid for students

Tuition fees for private tertiary education institutions range from CYP 1 000 to approximately CYP 2 500 per academic year and these are paid by the students. Scholarships are offered to excellent local students entering such institutions. Grants are given by the institutions to students who excel academically, or in sports, in the course of their studies and to students facing serious financial difficulties. In certain cases the Government supports students belonging to groups with special financial needs.

6.1.2.3. Academic year

The academic year begins near the end of September and ends near the end of May. Summer programmes are also offered.

6.1.2.4. Courses/Programmes of study

The programme of study normally follows a two-semester system with compulsory attendance and holidays during the Christmas and Easter periods. English is primarily the language of instruction. However, Greek is also used in some institutions.

6.1.2.5. Assessment/Qualifications

Students are continuously assessed by means of coursework, mid-term and final examinations. Examinations and grading are the full responsibility of the instructors. No external examination is used. Most of the programmes lead to either a certificate, a diploma, a higher diploma or a Bachelor's degree. The difference between these diplomas is the duration of study and the content. Some postgraduate programmes are also offered leading to a Master's degree.

The qualifications earned at private tertiary institutions are not recognised unless the corresponding programme is educationally accredited.

6.1.2.6. Teachers

Teachers come from Cyprus and other countries such as the UK, USA and Canada.

To teach at the associate level (two-year programmes) teachers need to hold at least a Bachelor's degree and for the Bachelor's degree programmes (four-year programmes) they need at least a Master's degree. However, the trend is for colleges to employ teachers with Ph.D degrees.

6.2. University *(Panepistimio)*

The University of Cyprus was established in 1989 by Law No. 144/1989 enacted by the House of Representatives and admitted its first students in 1992. Admission to the University is highly sought. The ratio of candidates to admissions is 10 to 1.

The main objectives of the University of Cyprus are twofold: the promotion of scholarship and education through teaching and research, and the enhancement of the cultural, social and economic development of Cyprus. The University is a public corporate body. It is governed by the Council and the Senate. The faculties and departments are administered by boards; each faculty is headed by a dean and each department is headed by a chairperson.

The University of Cyprus offers programmes of study in its Nicosia and Latsia campuses.

6.2.1. Admission requirements

Applicants must have successfully completed a six-year secondary school and passed the competitive entrance examinations set by the Ministry of Education and Culture. For a limited number of places there are special criteria applicable for children of missing persons or living in enclaves, university entrance examinations and/or GCE credentials for expatriates, repatriated Cypriots, and overseas students who have a good knowledge of Greek or Turkish as well as entrance examinations set by the Ministry of Education of Greece for Greek nationals.

6.2.2. Fees/Financial aid for students

Fees total CYP 4 000 a year for Cypriot undergraduate students and are paid by the State. The CYP 4 000 fees for students admitted from Greece are also paid by the State. The postgraduate fees are also CYP 4 000 a year. Cypriot students receive a CYP 2 000 grant from the State and the remaining CYP 2 000 is paid by them. Fees for foreign students total CYP 4 000 a year. Graduate Cypriot students may apply to the State for scholarships of CYP 2 000. About 30% of graduate students receive this type of scholarship.

6.2.3. Academic year

The academic year begins in September and ends in July of the following year.

6.2.4. Courses/Programmes of study

Four faculties offer courses in:

- humanities and social sciences (departments of education, foreign languages and literatures, social and political sciences, Turkish studies);
- pure and applied sciences (departments of computer science, mathematics and statistics, natural sciences);
- economics and management (departments of economics, public and business administration);
- letters (departments of Byzantine and modern Greek studies, classics and philosophy, history and archaeology, archaeological research unit).

The programmes of studies at the University of Cyprus are based on credit hours. One credit hour is normally equivalent to one weekly 50-minute 'class' per semester. A degree is awarded after successful completion of a 120 credit-hour programme within a department provided that the foreign language requirement (6-9 credits) is satisfied. The languages of instruction are Greek and Turkish.

6.2.5. Assessment/Qualifications

The academic year comprises two semesters during which attendance is compulsory. Testing and evaluation may include a written and/or oral examination at the end of the semester, a mid-term examination and coursework. Students are expected to complete their programme of studies in eight semesters.

The basic functional academic unit is the faculty department. The faculty has the full responsibility for the assessment of the students. No external examination is used. Successful completion of department requirements leads to a first final university degree *(Ptychio)*. Postgraduate degree programmes are also available leading to the degree of Master and the Ph.D *(Didaktoriko)*. Some postgraduate programmes may also be available for part-time studies.

6.2.6. Teachers

The academic faculty is comprised of Greek and Turkish-Cypriot academics and faculty members from Greece and other countries, recruited from reputable European, American and other universities.

6.3. Statistics

Type of institution	Students	Teachers	Student/teacher Ratio
Public	4 978	432	11.5
Private	5 004	380	13.2

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